

A THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO CURRENT RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

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BY
DAVID P. GALLAGHER
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David P. Gallagher,

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of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Faculty Committee

Wm. H. Smith

Allen J. Moore

March 28, 1978
Date

Joseph C. Hangle, Jr.
Dean

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION.	1
Definition of Major Terms	3
Work Previously Done in the Field	4
Scope and Limitations of the Project.	7
Procedure for Integration	8
2. FIVE MAJOR CULTS AND WHY THEY ARE GROWING . . .	9
Introduction.	9
Five Major Cults in the United States	15
The Unification Church.	16
The Divine Light Mission.	19
The International Society of Krishna	
Consciousness	22
The Church of Scientology	26
The Children of God	29
Why Are The Cults Prospering?	31
Youth Turning on to Religion in the 1970's. .	34
3. THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS	38
Historical Heritage	38
A Basic World View.	40
Christian Theism.	43
Eastern Pantheistic Monism.	46
Jesus Christ: God or Guru.	64
The Question of Sin	70
Time, Salvation and the Scriptures.	74
4. AN EVANGELICAL RESPONSE	79

APPENDIX

A. RESOURCE SECTIONS

Resource for Teaching Session 1	
"Why Are These Groups Growing?"	95
Resource for Teaching Session 2	
"A Basic World View"	101
Resource for Teaching Session 3	
"Contrast of Theism and Pantheistic	
Monism"	104
Resource for Teaching Session 4	
"The Uniqueness of Christian Scriptures	
and of the Person of Jesus Christ".	111
B. A GLOSSARY OF EASTERN MYSTICAL TERMS.	115
C. A WHO'S WHO OF GURUS AND OTHER MYSTICS.	123
D. A COMPENDIUM OF EASTERN CULTS	126
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	130

ABSTRACT

"A Theological Response To Current Religious Movements" by David Gallagher, deals with the problem of contemporary movements in the United States and their impact upon youth. Such questions as, "What enables such groups to prosper?", "What are the religious interests of youth in the United States?" and "How are youth responding to the newest magnet of mystic sects that offer a kind of love and joy?".

The project undertakes to present a theological response to those various religious movements. The response is from an evangelical point of view and makes specific suggestions for evangelical churches. The project combines the theological discipline as well as the functional discipline of Christian education. Methods used included basic library research, field study which included visiting various new religious groups and interviews with persons involved in both evangelical churches and some religious mystic movements.

Five major groups are considered with some specificity, including, the Unification Church, the Divine Light Mission, The International Society for Krishna Consciousness,

The Church of Scientology and the Children of God. Consideration is given as to why these kinds of groups are growing and how youth have "turned on" to these groups. A "Compendium of Eastern Cults" and "Glossary of Eastern Mystical Terms" is included in the paper, along with a "Who's Who of Gurus and Other Mystics".

The theological section considers the historical heritage and basic world views looking at both Christian Theism and Eastern Pantheistic Monism. The question of "Who is Jesus Christ" and questions of sin, time, salvation and the Scriptures are dealt with.

In the last chapter, entitled "An Evangelical Response" concepts of mission, evangelism, dialogue, and salvation are considered with concluding suggestions and implimentations presented for use in local churches or youth groups.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This project deals with the problem of contemporary Religious movements in the United States. The project further attempts to present a theological response from an evangelical perspective, and to relate this to youth in our culture.

Many of America's young people are on the move toward a radically different life — not to drugs or rioting as in the 1960's but to religious cults. By the hundreds of thousands, these youths are living and working on behalf of new-found beliefs and leaders. Such converts can be seen roaming the streets of United States cities, selling incense as Oriental monks or singing Gospel hymns and taking up collections. Many are living in suburban or smalltown communes, others in communities of their own in the countryside. Large numbers are found in major cities across the United States as well, influencing people today with their new-found religious beliefs.

The shift of these young people often brings a total break from past friends, jobs or studies and family. In

that situation, a continuing state of hostility has developed between some of the cults and some parents who believe that their children are being brainwashed in virtual captivity.

A survey¹ states that anywhere from one million to three million Americans, mostly in their 20's or late teens, are involved in 200 to 1,000 of these new cults. Today, the nation's new believers vary widely from Oriental meditators to bands of youths waiting in the desert for saviors due to arrive in spaceships from the "kingdom that Christ came from."

What enables such groups to prosper? What are the religious interests of young people in the United States? What are some of the religious motivations and orientations of these youth? What impact are contemporary religious movements making upon young people in our churches? How are youths responding to the newest magnet of mystic sects that offer love and joy? These and many other questions must be faced and answered in a theological context.

This project undertakes to present a theological response to the impact of Contemporary Religious movements upon youth in the United States.

¹"Religious Cults; Newest Magnet for Youth," U.S. News & World Report, LXXXIV (June 14, 1976), 52.

DEFINITION OF MAJOR TERMS

Current Religious Movements: Jacob Needleman² lists a variety of religious movements which include Hinduism, Buddhism, Sufism, the Occult, Zen, Baba-lovers, Subud, Transcendental Meditation, Tibetan religion, astrology, reincarnation, nature religions, esotericism, drug-associated religion and the like. Robert S. Ellwood, Jr.,³ includes these and adds others, among them the Rosicrucians, Spiritualism, Theosophy, New Thought — all of them longer-established in America, and less "new" — "I Am," Unidentified Flying Objects, the Prosperos, Scientology, Abilitism, Builders of the Adytum, the Church of Light, Neo-Pagan groups, Vedanta Societies, the Self-Realization Fellowship, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Nichiren Shoshu, and many subspecies.

Theological Response. The theological response which will follow in this paper will be that of Evangelical Theology.⁴

²Jacob Needleman, The New Religions (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970), p. 2.

³Robert S. Ellwood, Jr., Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973).

⁴See Richard Quebedeaux, The Young Evangelicals (New York; Harper & Row, 1974), George Ladd, Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) and Bernard Ramm, Handbook of Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966).

Evangelicals or New Evangelicals identify with confessional statements of theology which include (1) the virgin birth of Jesus Christ; (2) the authority of the Bible; (3) the resurrection of the physical body of Jesus and of the saints at the end of history; (4) the substitutionary blood atonement; and (5) the return of Christ to establish his kingdom.

WORK PREVIOUSLY DONE IN THE FIELD

Three major works seem to stand out as contributing to the study of New Religious movements in the United States. Needleman presents a variety of the new movements and a discussion of each. Ellwood presents a history of the new Religions and gives a discussion of most modern religious groups. He is most helpful in presenting some general characteristics of modern American cults. In general the characteristics he lists are as follows: (1) A founder who has had, or at least seems to know the secret of nontemporal ecstatic experience; (2) An interpretation of the experience as possession or marvellous travel; (3) A desire to be "modern" and to use scientific language; (4) A band of supernormal helpers; (5) A reaction against orthodoxy; (6) Eclecticism and syncretism; (7) A monistic and impersonal ontology; (8) Optimism success orientation, and a tendency to evolutionary views; (9) Emphasis on healing;

(10) Use in many cases of magic techniques; (11) A simple but definite process of entry and initiation; (12) In some cases, the establishment of a sacred center; (13) Emphasis on psychic powers; (14) Tendency to attract isolated individuals rather than family groups; and (15) Increasing emphasis on participation by all members in the ecstatic experience through group chanting, meditation, and so forth.⁶

Marty is helpful in presenting a brief history of these groups, showing mainline religion and the contrast between Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism and presenting some suggestions and statistics as to the impact they are making in our country. Marty suggests,

...few of these religions stood any chance of overtaking the historic complex of faiths, and even taken together they will no doubt remain a small minority, to be noticed because they are exotic growths on what can often be a drab and sere scene.⁷

He provides two helpful insights as to their influence when he says,

If the new do not prevail they will exert influences in two ways. One is as an intrusive presence, constantly attractive because they are intrusive and exceptional, an alternative to or judgment upon majority religion. The other is as what might be called suffusive forces; they offer some features that will suffuse, will cast a glow upon, will subtly soften or open or alter the Jewish and Christian faiths and the secular style.⁸

⁶Ellwood, pp. 28-31.

⁷Martin E. Marty, A Nation of Behavers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 29.

⁸Ibid.

One final contribution which Marty gives us is that he presents a clue to why they seem to be growing and the impact they are presently making when he says, "Most theorists connected the rise of the new groups to boredom or discontent with the existing tradition and to the search for identity."⁹

Little has been done in the field of interpreting any impact these groups are making upon the Evangelical Church in this country. Several Evangelical writers have given guidebooks to these new movements but from a limited perspective. Pat Means presents a guidebook through eastern mysticism. He tells the reader that the various religious groups are making a rather profound impression upon our culture when he says,

The Transcendental Meditation movement (TM) has already initiated more than one million Americans into its ranks with 30,000 more joining each month. Another 100,000 Americans have completed the sixty hours of Erhard Seminars Training (est), which is a high-powered mixture of Zen, Scientology, and Dale Carnegie. The Buddhist sect known as Nichiren Shoshu/Soka Gakkai currently claims 250,000 followers in the United States, the majority of whom are young Anglo-Saxons. Sun Moon's aggressive Unification Church has collected an additional 30,000 members, the Hare Krishna movement another 10,000. And there are virutally thousands involved in the Sufi cult, Zen Buddhism, Guru Maharaj Ji's Divine Light Mission and a dozen other cults.¹⁰

He continues by telling us that more than two million people

⁹Ibid., p. 130.

¹⁰Pat Means, The Mystical Maze (San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade For Christ, 1976), pp. 21-22.

in the United States alone are actively involved in some eastern cult or discipline and that this is just the "tip of the iceberg" for the eastern subculture. What he does not tell us is that these two million have to be compared to 15.5 million New Evangelicals and 23.5 Fundamentalists as well as 8.0 Confessional, 20.0 Liberals and 0.1 Radicals.¹¹ So, though Means tells us that a major impact is being made upon our culture by these new religious groups, one must evaluate rather carefully what he really means. The few other Evangelical writers on the subject of new religious movements would include William J. Petersen¹² who wrote a sort of pocket guide to the new movements for the "man on the street."

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE PROJECT

It is the intent of this project to examine some of the more popular new religious movements in our country, to give a theological response from an Evangelical point of view, and to make specific suggestions for Evangelical churches. It is not the purpose of this project to attempt to look at each of these new movements in any detail or to be a comprehensive discussion on the groups as a whole. Our purpose here is to take a general look at some of the

¹¹Marty, pp. 81-82.

¹²William J. Petersen, Those Curious New Cults, (New Canaan, CT: Keats, 1975).

new religious movements, see what kind of impact they are making on churches, especially upon youth within these churches, and to respond theologically from an Evangelical frame of reference.

PROCEDURE FOR INTEGRATION

This project will combine the theological discipline as well as the functional discipline of Christian education. From the field of Christian education will come aspects of Christian education ministry programming, and suggestions for meeting needs. From the theological discipline will come a theological interpretation and response to the various movements which are present in our culture.

The methods which will be used shall include basic library research, some field study of new religious groups, and interviews with persons both in mainline churches and in some of the new religious movements. The methodology which Ellwood uses is to present a religious group and then give some reading selections. Marty groups and makes conclusions generally about the groups, and Means begins with a theological system and moves into a brief discussion of various new groups and how they differ from this structure. Petersen presents various groups step by step and at the end of the discussion of the religious movement, presents a "Biblical" refutation of the movement.

Chapter 2

FIVE MAJOR CULTS AND WHY THEY ARE GROWING

INTRODUCTION

Krister Stendahl, Dean of the Harvard University Divinity School, once suggested¹ that a new "world theology" may be in the making from the "shambles" of modern Christian theology. In contrast to the past tendency to ask what the traditional church or biblical teaching is, he says,

We come to a point where theologians have started to become much more bold, expressing 'straight' theology out of religious experience, rather than the historical approach. This will allow contemporary religious experience once again to inform theology. Ultimately it will bring us to give much more serious attention to other religious experiences than Christianity alone.

This does not mean that distinctively Christian truth will be lost, Stendahl explained, but that religious truth will be sought wherever it may be found. "Truth cannot take adjectives. There cannot be a Methodist truth, or a Lutheran truth or a Catholic truth. There can be only — truth."

We have in America, a subculture which has long lived to taste these exotic spiritual experiences found in

¹"World Theology Move Seen by Harvard Dean," Los Angeles Times, (May 31, 1970).

mystic sects and cults. Robert Ellwood, Professor at the University of Southern California, writes,

Indeed, it has not satisfied itself just with reproducing more or less successfully export versions of the great non-Western faiths. It has also given birth to religious expressions otherwise not known that may also cast a light on some facet of nonadjectival truth.²

A news article³ suggested that Mystic sects offer love and joy to the U.S. young and that these sects are getting a big response. The article further pointed out that they are also drawing fire from parents and other critics. Mystic missionaries in the West? Political endorsements for Hindu religious movements? Yoga and meditation classes sponsored by local churches? As incredible as these phenomena would have seemed even a generation ago, their presence in western society today denotes one of the most remarkable shifts toward the metaphysical in the history of western civilization.

Not that the religious impact of the East has been totally strange to the West, however, even though western learning has been predominantly Judeo-Christian through the centuries, western philosophers have, on occasion, been strongly influenced by thought from the Eastern World.

²Robert S. Ellwood, Jr., Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 2.

³"Religious Cults; Newest Magnet for Youth," U.S. News & World Report, LXXXIV (June 10, 1976), 52.

As early as the late 1600's the Dutch philosopher Spinoza was teaching Europeans a specialized form of pantheism, the dominant philosophy of India which stresses the divinity of all things. In America, Hindu philosophy surfaced in the mid-1800's as New England transcendentalists such as Emerson and Thoreau preached their own ideas of pantheism. To Emerson, the "higest revelation" was that God existed in every person.

As for Thoreau, who was in many ways a prototype of the 20th century mystic, he meditated, read the Hindu scriptures and practiced yoga faithfully at his famous Walden Pond. He described himself as a mystic, a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher to boot.

It remained, however, for a Hindu swami named Vivekenanda to first bring Hinduism to the West. A disciple of the revered Indian sage Ramakrishna, Vivekenanda turned up in 1893 at the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago where he astounded the Western World with his wisdom. Six years later, Vivekenanda founded the Vedanta Society in New York City.

At about the same time, another mystic sect, the Theosophy movement, was founded in New York. These two sects have had a significant influence on a number of intellectuals in this century.

By the early sixties, the Western World, and

particularly its youth, was prepared philosophically for the rise of eastern mysticism. It remained only for the drug culture to prepare it experientially. In 1967, the Beatles made their now-famous link-up with a then-unknown guru, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and his occult-sounding product, Transcendental Meditation. In that same year Paul McCartney and John Lennon wrote "I Am the Walrus" which opened with the declaration: "I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together." "Instant Karma" followed in 1970 and the next year saw the release of George Harrison's "My Sweet Lord" with its alternating chorus of "Hallelujah" and "Hare Krishna."

The Beatle's songs were widely popular. Not only did their success help pave the way for a growing litany of eastern lyrics in music, but it did much to foster a general interest in all things eastern, from mysticism to the martial arts, from Vedanta to vegetarianism.

Packaged in western terminology and stripped of many of the strict disciplines associated with their mother religions in the East, these new cults have attracted hundreds of thousands of young people throughout the West in the last few years.

Many of America's young people are on the move toward a radically different life — not to drugs or rioting as in the 1960's but to religious cults.

By the hundreds of thousands, these youths are living and working on behalf of new-found beliefs and leaders. Such converts can be seen roaming the streets of the United States cities — selling incense as Oriental monks or singing Gospel hymns and taking up collections.

Many are living in suburban or small-town communes, others in communities of their own in the countryside. Their shift often brings a total break from the past of friends, jobs or studies and family. In that situation, a continuing state of hostilities has developed between some of the cults and some parents who believe that their children are being brainwashed in virtual captivity.

There has been a rash of forcible removals of young people — with or without court orders — from the communes. Officials are looking into some of the cults for tax and other violations.

The growing warfare between conventional America and the cults moved into a new dimension on June 1, 1976 at the New York City's Yankee Stadium, where 30,000 persons came to see and hear Korean evangelist Sun Myung Moon, head of the Unification Church and a leading figure among the new cultists.

A news article reported that,

Hecklers tore down decorations and fought with Mr. Moon's followers. The millionaire preacher delivered his speech behind a shield of bullet-proof glass to

the accompaniment of boos, catcalls and smoke bombs.⁴

The emergence of an eastern mystical subculture has shown vast proportions. The Transcendental Meditation Movement (TM) has already initiated more than one million Americans into its ranks with 30,000 more joining each month.⁵ Another 100,000 Americans have completed the sixty hours of Erhard Seminars Training (est), which is a high-powered mixture of Zen, Scientology, and Dale Carnegie. The Buddhist sect known as Nichiren Shoshu/Soka Gakkai currently claims 250,000 followers in the United States, the majority of whom are young Anglo Saxons.⁶

Sun Moon's aggressive Unification Church has collected an additional 30,000 members, the Hare Krishna movement another 10,000. And there are virtually thousands involved in the Sufi cult, Zen Buddhism, Guru Maharaj Ji's Divine Light Mission and a dozen other cults. Means suggests that "All in all, more than two million people in the United States alone are actively involved in some eastern cult or discipline."⁷ And the report gives the figures of anywhere from one million to three million Americans, mostly in their twenties or late teens, who

⁴Ibid.

⁵Pat Means, The Mystical Maze (San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1976), p. 22.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

are involved in 200 to 1,000 new cults.⁸

Today, the nation's "new believers" vary widely — from Oriental meditators to bands of youth waiting in the desert for saviors due to arrive in spaceships from "the same kingdom that Christ came from."

Having seen briefly the background of the impact of the growth of the Eastern Thought as a growing force in the United States and having looked slightly at the enormous numbers of youth in this country who are becoming involved in these cults, attention shall now be directed to a more specific consideration of a few of the larger "major" cults influencing the religious scene today.

FIVE MAJOR CULTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Among the largest and most controversial of cults in the United States today are the Unification Church, The Divine Light Mission, The International Society for Krishna Consciousness, The Church of Scientology and the Children of God. Attention first shall be given to a brief sketch of these five major cults and their present impact and then a look briefly at the numerous other religious movements in our country:

⁸"Religious Cults: Newest Magnet for Youth," p. 52.

The Unification Church

The Unification Church was brought to the United States by Sun Myung Moon, a millionaire industrialist from Korea. The group now claims 30,000 United States members, averaging 24 years of age. Of these, 7,000 are described as full-time members. Church officials say that income to the national headquarters totalled 12 million dollars last year with State organizations pulling in about the same amount. Parents' protest organizations estimate the church's total income at more than 100 million dollars a year. Its extensive real-estate holdings include the recently purchased Hotel New Yorker.⁹

Sun Myung Moon's biography states that he was born in Pyungan Buk-do province of what is now North Korea on January 6, 1920.¹⁰ Although raised in a Presbyterian home, he was interested in spiritualism and mysticism from early in his life.

According to his literature, on Easter morning in 1936, while sixteen-year-old Moon was in deep prayer on a mountainside in Korea, Jesus Christ appeared to him to tell him he had an important mission to accomplish in the fulfillment of God's providence. He was to complete Christ's

⁹Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁰William J. Peterson, Those Curious New Cults (New Caanan, CT: Keats, 1975), p. 248.

unfinished work. The details of this vision are not exactly clear. Some say that he was to restore God's "perfect kingdom on earth"; some say that he not only saw a vision but heard a voice from heaven.

Moon studied engineering in Japan and wrote a major work which is entitled The Divine Principle.¹¹ In 1945, he began preaching, and this is where his biography begins to be confusing. He apparently was associated with an underground Pentecostal movement in Pyong Yang, North Korea's capital, until his anti-Communism got him into trouble with the North Korean government. He ended up in a slave labor camp for three years, until he was freed by United Nations forces in 1950.

Moving to South Korea, he worked as a harbor laborer in Pusan until he founded his church, officially called the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, in 1954.

Besides developing a new religion, he began building a multi-million dollar network of industries including pharmaceuticals, titanium production, ginseng tea, air rifles and stone vases. Today his holdings are valued at fifteen million dollars.¹²

¹¹Sun Myung Moon, The Divine Principle (New York: Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1973).

¹²Peterson, p. 251.

As Moon climbed the financial ladder in Korea, the government began to look more kindly at him. By the mid 1960's Moon had launched a few anti-Communist front groups, including the International Federation for Victory over Communism.

The next phase of the worldwide advance of the Unification Church started on January 1, 1972, when God appeared to Moon and told him to come to America and prepare the people for the Second Coming of Christ. The American headquarters was established on a twenty-two acre estate in Tarrytown, New York, which the church purchased for \$850,000.¹³

Moonites believe that it is impossible to decode the Bible without the use of The Divine Principle.

According to Moon, the first Adam, way back in the Garden of Eden, was supposed to have married Eve and together they would have had perfect children to build the kingdom. Together with God, Adam and Eve would then have formed the trinity. But instead God's desires were frustrated when, according to Moon's teaching, Eve was sexually seduced by Lucifer (Satan).¹⁴ This started a new trinity with Adam and Eve and Satan. While Moon's teachings seem to be a

¹³Ibid., p. 252.

¹⁴J. Isamu Yamamoto, The Moon Doctrine (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1976), p. 20.

take-off on traditional Christian doctrine, there are strong overtones of Taoism, mysticism and spiritualism as well. Robert Ellwood, Jr. gives an appraisal by saying, "...has all the marks of a Far Eastern new religion of the Japanese type" and shows "strong traces of the traditional shamanism of the Korean country-side."¹⁵ Ellwood goes on to say, "it places no small emphasis on clairvoyance, clairaudience, healing and spiritualistic phenomena."¹⁶

The Divine Light Mission

The Divine Light Mission was established in the United States about five years ago by Prem Pal Singh Rawat, 18, known by the title of Guru Maharaj Ji. He was born in India on December 10, 1957 and joined an Indian "Holy Family," a member of the highest of the high Brahmin caste. Maharaj Ji was eight (and attending a Roman Catholic mission school in Dehra Dun) when his father died. But before his father died, Maharaj Ji was given a challenge declaring that he would one day shine over the whole world as brightly as the sun shines in the sky. Maharaj Ji affirms in the official "Who Is Guru Maharaj Ji" that he didn't want to be a Satguru.

By the time he was twelve, he was making converts.

¹⁵ Ellwood, p. 292.

¹⁶ Ibid.

In 1969, he dispatched his first missionary, Mahatma Guru Charnandad to convert pagan London. In 1970 Maharaj Ji looked toward taking his knowledge to the world. He dropped out of school at the end of the ninth grade and began his formal mission. The following year he left India for West Gastonberry, England and his first public appearance was there.

At about that same time in Los Angeles, three members of the Divine Light Mission wired London, begging the satguru to include America in his itinerary. A month later he crossed the Atlantic. The Los Angeles team had distributed flyers inviting "all brothers of love" to welcome the Guru who could come "in the clouds with great power and glory," at the Los Angeles International Airport. About 200 people formed the welcoming committee, shouting "Bolie Shri, Satgurudev Maharaj Ki Jar," which freely translated means "Sing the praises of the Lord True-Revealer of Light, inexpressibly all-powerful majesty."

In 1972 he returned again. This time to Colorado which brought about 6,000 people together! About 2,000 converts were made. So by the Fall of 1972, Divine Light Centers were springing up in most major cities in the United States. According to their count they now had forty-five centers, 15,000 members and a national center in Denver, Colorado.¹⁷

¹⁷ Further description is given in Petersen, p. 236.

By Spring of 1973, there were 480 Divine Light Centers around the world and in every continent. Petersen¹⁸ suggests that the United States membership has now grown to about 35,000, states the present membership at 50,000.¹⁹

But the really big event which was billed by devotees as "the most important event in the history of the world" was Soul-Rush, a three-day festival, better known as Millennium 1973. This event was to usher in the Millennium described in Revelation 20. Some 80,000 were expected although other expectations ranged from 144,000 (also taken from the book of Revelation) to 200,000. But Millennium '73 never got off the ground. Between 12,000 and 20,000 showed up at the meeting, although admission was free of charge and curiosity-seeking persons were there in droves.

It is reported²⁰ that the Divine Light Mission has 3,000 members. Another 575 belong to monastic orders take an annual vow of poverty, chastity and obedience, and often give all their possessions to the mission — but only after a year's trial, leaders assert.

Divine Light Mission has produced a film, entitled, "Lord of the Universe" which was first shown in University

¹⁹"Religious Cults: Newest Magnet for Youth", p. 53.

²⁰R. D. Clements, God and the Gurus (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975), p. 17.

College, London, in June, 1972. There is an album now available with music of the Divine Light Mission which is sometimes played at meetings. Other films like "Satguru Has Come" are used, and the newspapers "Divine Times" (British) and "Divine Light" (American) are frequently sold.²¹

The International Society of Krishna Consciousness

Probably one of the most conspicuous of all new religious groups today is the Krishna Consciousness Society. This fellowship, with its core of totally dedicated, full-time devotees, is committed to strict, conservative but ecstatic interpretation of a school of Hinduism. These devotees, mostly, young, wearing yellow robes, their heads shaven except for a topknot in back, are common sights as they dance and sing "Hare Krishna" on the streets of many large American Cities. They sing the sacred words over and over, accompanied by hand cymbals, drums and viols. Their hands risen in adoration, their bodies writhe in sensuous rapture. Passersby will be given a small card with the address of the local Krishnaite center and an invitation to attend a great "spiritual feast" the coming Sunday afternoon, with dancing, singing, puppet show, talk, and vegetarian food.

Anyone accepting the invitation would find that the

²¹Ibid., p. 17ff.

experiences on the streets was only a mild foretaste of the exoticism in store for him. In the temple, he might wonder if he were in the right country, though with an open mind and heart he will enjoy a fascinating, beautiful unforgettable afternoon. He will find himself in a room clouded with incense and full of a great number of the saffron-robed dancers. At one end will be found a wide altar bedecked with images of Krishna the Sweet divine lover as an infant, or playing his flute, or with Radha his freshfaced consort. Pictures on the walls display Krishna. A meal would be given full of strange spicy and sweet vegetarian dishes served on paper plates, perhaps eaten with the fingers, Indian-style.

Says Ellwood, "11 of the Indian religious movements have behind them a powerful charismatic leader."²² Like most of the others Swami Bhaktivedanta (born Abhay Charna De in 1896) was a Bengali of prominent and wealthy family, and received a Western education at the University of Calcutta.

According to Indian tradition, Krishna appeared in India around 3,000 B.C. and taught his disciple Arjuna. This is recorded in some detail in the Bhagavad Gita. The last incarnation of Krishna, according to the ISKCON, was A.D. 1486 in India, when Lord Caitanya appeared. He began

²²Ellwood, p. 242.

an unbroken chain of disciplic succession which came down to His Divine Grace Sri Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaja at the beginning of this century. It was from this Spiritual Master that Prabhupada, the Guru of the movement, was initiated in 1933. He was specifically ordered to spread Krishna-consciousness in the West. In 1965 (when he had reached the Hindu stage of "sannyasa," renunciation) he came to the United States to do this. The movement first reached London in 1968.

Prabhupada, now a very old man, spends his time in translating Hindu books and writing letters to his disciples. There are three temples in England now, and about thirty-five in the United States.²³

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness is divided into an inner and outer circle. The inner circle leads in effect a monastic life, even though some members may be married. It is the monastic devotees for the most part considered ministers or seminarians (following a two and one half year curriculum), who wear the saffron robes and are most conspicuous. Some idea of their life can be gathered from the daily schedule: Rise, shower, and dress at 3:45 AM, chant, read about Krishna until 8:30 AM at which time is a communal breakfast. At 9:00 AM is the temple cleaning and the morning hours are used for work, and some

²³Clements, p. 26.

chanting. During the afternoon hours after a noon meal there is work time and at 6:00 PM a second shower which is followed at 7:00 PM by an evening worship ceremony, chanting, dancing, offering and everyone going to sleep by 10:00 PM.

The Krishnaite group seems, above all, a family. Although there may be some marriages, they are clearly secondary to the cohesion of the whole Krishnaite family. Most activities are done together; a member senses himself and his companions as a highly distinct body from the outside world. Swami Bhaktivedanta is like a father, and all others his children. Ellwood suggests,

The creation of a family, with play, child-like joy, communality, and a highly structured life with few individual decisions, is evident. Most members, like so many young people in our society, clearly want and need a new family, with ways in it for the perpetuation of happy, or wistful, childhood.²⁴

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness claims a total of 2,000 flowing robed "Krishna chanters" in the United States, plus hundreds of part time members at 29 centers across the country.²⁵ It bases belief on ancient Hindu scriptures called "Vedas." The movement prohibits the eating of meat, drinking of alcohol and most sexual activity.

²⁴Ellwood, p. 242.

²⁵"Religious Cults: Newest Magnet for Youth," p. 54.

The Church of Scientology

Few of the organizations we are dealing with have attracted as much recent enthusiasm or controversy as Scientology. It has been accused of many things. Its members, on the other hand, with joyful, contagious fervor claim that Scientology can give "total freedom." Those who have reached the state of "clear" make statements like:

There is no name to describe the way I feel. At last I am cause. I am Clear — I can do anything I want to do. I feel like a child with new life — everything is so wonderful and beautiful.
Clear is Clear!
It's unlike anything I could have imagined. The colors, the clarity, the brightness of everything is beyond belief. Everything is so new, I feel new born. I am filled with the wonder of everything.²⁶

An organization which can produce, by any means, such moving statements as these must have something remarkable in its life, and some remarkable personality behind it. On the first impression, one may wonder just where to look for the marvel. The usual pictures of the founder, L. Ron Hubbard, which hang in every Scientology building do not suggest at first glance what the man is — a contemporary master in a class with the hypnotic-eyed Blavatsky or Gurdjieff, if not greater.

The churches and centers of Scientology have about them something of the atmosphere of a regimental office in

²⁶"Advanced Success Stories," Advanced Organization of the Church of Scientology of California, 1970.

the modern bureaucratic army, with its abbreviations, neologisms, routing charts, chain of command, its air of intricate and mystifying efficiency. Behind much of this is the stream of tapes, books, bulletins, and directives which come from Hubbard, founder and spiritual leader of Scientology. The experience of Scientology seems essentially two-pronged. On the one hand, it derives from being part of an aggressive, close organization, together with the feel of modernity and certainty which technical language and organizational polish communicate. On the other hand, the product is not a new brand of soap or the services of a government department, but an experience described in language which reminds one of the shaman's flight, and a philosophy in which dimensions, indeed universes, rise and fall with the shifting of consciousness.

Hubbard was born March 13, 1911 in Tilden, Nebraska. His father was an officer in the Navy. Hubbard grew up on his grandfather's Montana ranch, though he accompanied his father on tours of duty in the Far East. He graduated from high school in Washington, D.C., then studied at George Washington University, leaving in the early thirties.²⁷

In 1950 Hubbard published his most famous book, Dianetics.²⁸ The ideas of his book are the basis of

²⁷ Ellwood, p. 169ff.

²⁸ LaFayette Ronald Hubbard, Dianetics (New York: Hermitage House, 1950).

Scientology. Hubbard established a Hubbard Dianetic Research Foundation in Elizabeth, New Jersey. There were some differences of opinion and legal problems resulted causing a division. The foundation was moved several places ending up finally in Phoenix. There Scientology was founded in 1952 as the Hubbard Association of Scientists. Scientology was different from Dianetics in at least two important respects: the concept of the thetan and the use of the E-meter. The thetan is the individual consciousness, which Hubbard said has the capacity to separate from the body and mind, and to create MEST — matter, energy, space, and time.

In 1954, Hubbard established the Founding Church of Scientology in Washington, D.C. Since then, the symbolism of the movement has become increasingly ecclesiastical, though participation in this side of it is optional.

The Church of Scientology claims 600,000 members. Over-all income figures are "not available" church leaders seem according to U.S. News & World Report, to say. Critics estimate, however, that the group has only 5,000 to 10,000 hardcore members and income of anywhere from 50 million to 300 million dollars a year.²⁹

²⁹"Religious Cults: Newest Magnet for Youth" p. 54.

The Children of God

The Children of God has been described as having 3,500 members in the United States and around the world in 120 communes. U.S. News & World Report reports that the organization has become diffuse since its California-based leaders left for Europe several years ago. Prophecies and orders are handed down by founder David ("Moses") Berg through pamphlets called "Mo letters." Funds for the apocalyptic sect are raised mostly through members' donations and street solicitation.

William Petersen writes about the formation of the group saying that the founder of the movement is fiftyish David Berg, who has now become known as Moses, or "Mo" for short. Petersen writes³⁰ that all the Children of God have adopted biblical names. A Christian and Missionary Alliance minister, Berg was pastor of a church in Arizona, until he left for unknown reasons and associated with Rev. Fred Jordan of the American Soul Clinic in California. Jordan was an aggressive Pentecostal evangelist and radio preacher who needed a public-relations man to enlarge his work. Berg seemed to fill the bill.

But while relations with the public improved and the Soul Clinic acquired a Texas ranch to train missionaries,

³⁰Petersen, pp. 44-60.

relations between Jordan and Berg deteriorated. Finally Berg quit.

He next appears as the director of a coffeehouse in Huntington Beach, California in 1968. Calling his ministry "Teens for Christ" Berg taught intensive Bible study sessions and established a communal pattern of living among a small closely-knit group of followers. Those followers, encouraged by their leader, soon quit their jobs, dropped out of the system and became dedicated disciples of David Berg.

Then came the turning point. In 1969, Berg received a prophecy that California would soon fall into the ocean during an earthquake and that in Moses-like fashion, he should lead the Children of God through the wilderness to safety.

The National Observer tells how they "roamed streets and beaches in sackcloth, faces daubed with ashes, yokes hanging from their necks, exhorting the unsaved to come to Jesus before it was too late." But they also delighted in interrupting church services, marching in barefoot while the services were in progress and sitting in the first rows, or on the floor in front.

Soon the Children of God left California and went to the southwest. They settled in Texas and began to prepare for the second coming of Christ.

Eileen Fitch³¹ reports that,

In 1969 he (Mo) predicted that California would fall into the ocean. In 1973 his members picketed the UN with signs claiming disaster for America through the Comet Kohoutek. Berg is deeply into astrology, necromancy (speaking with the dead) as are many other cult members today. Berg claims that he once existed in 1272 A.D. as the head of a Bulgarian Gypsy Band.³²

Fitch informs us that the followers in the Children of God are taught to despise their families as creatures of the devil and that they are encouraged to lie and to deceive their parents. One former Children of God member testified on NBC's "Chronolog" program in the summer of 1972:³³

I was taught in the Children of God I would have to commit adultery, theft, and murder during the last seven years of the world because of the fact that we would be under cover, and there would be things like this that would have to be done in order to sustain our group.

WHY ARE THE CULTS PROSPERING?

As was stated earlier in this paper there are anywhere from one million to three million Americans, mostly in their twenties or late teens, involved in 200 to 1,000 cults in this country. Along with the five major cults just presented already, attention might be drawn to a short list of others which would include: Astrology, I Ching,

³¹Eileen Fitch, "Who Are The Children of God" Flashlight, (January 1977), 4.

³²Ibid.

³³"The Deceptions of the Children of God" Christianity Today, XVII (July 20, 1973), 15.

Edgar Cayce and the A.R.E., Spiritualism, Witchcraft, Black Muslims, Satanism, Herbert Armstrong and his Plain Truth, Zen Buddhism, Transcendental Meditation and the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Baba-lovers and the Meher Baba, Bahai and Gurdjieff. The purpose of this paper is not to present a discussion of the various cults but simply to bring to the foreground the fact that they are present in our culture.

One might ask the question: "Why are these new groups growing?" or "What enables such groups to prosper?" Many religious and social analysts point to the large reservoir of troubled youth in the United States, some involved in drugs, and others with traditionally devout views that crack, often in the transition from home to college. These and other youths are attracted to the authoritarian image presented by many cult leaders. For such young people, religious fervor usually runs at a high pitch. It seems that not only cults, but almost any authoritarian image today draws youth for a time. There is a movement entitled Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts which is led by a well respected Evangelical Church leader, Bill Gothard. This movement attracts thousands across the United States in mass meetings and is intensely authoritarian in its presentation. There seems to be an attraction for someone "who has some answers." Youth today seem to be desperately looking for direction. Today Extreme

Conservative Evangelicalism seems to be rapidly on the climb in interest and perhaps one factor is that youth are seeking security and direction.

Cultists speak enthusiastically of the "warmth" and "love" they find among fellow members. Moon's followers, for example, call him "our spiritual father" and call their group "a unified family." An interesting observation is made by Herbert Hendin, a Columbia University psychoanalyst who studies youth movements for the Center for Policy, Research, reports, "I've never seen one of these young people who didn't have some kind of serious failure in family life."³⁴ "They are turning desperately from the pain of the outside world to the childlike support and structures of a make-believe family."

Marty, suggests that the cults are leveling off: "Campus leaders tell me the number of new recruits is leveling off, and most members leave after a few years in the cults."³⁵ He continues, "These groups were able to survive persecution and grow because they offered a structure of belief that would support people all through life and would encourage them to raise their children in the Church" when he was asked to compare the new cults with such faiths as the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons.

³³"Religious Cults: Newest Magnet for Youth" p. 54.

³⁴Martin E. Marty, A Nation of Behavers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 55.

YOUTH TURNING ON TO RELIGION IN THE 1970'S

It was in 1963 that President John F. Kennedy was gunned down in Dallas. Young people seemed to identify with the young President. When he was slain, the blood of many youthful dreams was poured out too.

Other things had also happened in 1963. Pope John XXIII, the aged Pope with a youthful heart, passed on, and the Roman Catholic Church would never be the same.

At Harvard University, a professor named Timothy Leary was dismissed because he had become an evangelist for his LSD religion. LSD, he said could lead young people to God. Though the university officials could not follow him, hundreds of thousands of young people did.

In England, four mop-headed youths from Liverpool who called themselves the Beatles created their own music and a new beat known as the Mersey Sound. Young people mobbed them wherever they went. Also in England, the Bishop of Woolwich shook the Anglican Church, to say nothing of the rest of Christianity, by publishing a little paperback called Honest To God.³⁶ He spoke of "religionless Christianity." He emphasized that God wasn't "out there (someplace)," but was "inside." Another religious

³⁶John A. T. Robinson, Honest To God (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963).

paperback came out that year too, entitled The Cross and the Switchblade.³⁷ It claimed no great theological merit, but merely told the story of a young Pentecostal preacher named David Wilkerson who felt called of God to work among street gangs in New York's ghettos. He told them, "Jesus loves you." Along with Honest To God, it made the best-seller lists.

Each of these incidents of 1963 started a chain reaction that is still growing in the 1970's, culminating in the rise of Eastern religions, the occult, the Jesus people, the Catholic Pentecostals, religious revivals and the like today.

Some contributing factors to this "Turning on to Religion" might include some of the following:

1. Disillusionment with America. Vietnam. The election of 1964 in aftermath of the Kennedy assassination. Civil rights marches. Here was America, the richest country in the world, totally disregarding some of its greatest problems while fighting a war thousands of miles away that nobody wanted to fight.
2. Dehumanization by science. Surgeons were talking about transplanting hearts. Computers were spitting out information faster than man could absorb it.

³⁷David Wilkerson, The Cross and the Switchblade (New York: Random House, 1963).

3. Advent of the drug culture. Years ago writer Aldous Huxley had predicted the day when the machine would be worshipped. In his book The Doors of Perception³⁸ he pointed to drugs as the doorway to a new religion. And led by Dr. Timothy Leary, young people followed through the door.

4. Future fright. Nearly every youth goes through a time of this. Erik Erikson talks much of this period when young people try to find their "niches." Nothing is so very strange about that except the unique factors of population explosion, nuclear warfare, the pollution crisis, the disintegration of society and so on.

5. Breakdown of the family. Despite increasing leisure, families seem to use it to spend more time away from each other. TV, that strange living-room wonder, has brought the members of the family back into the home and converted them into utter strangers. It has been said that a young person can have a car and a guitar, but no real sense of belonging in the home and community. So young people are making their own families. Perhaps the biggest family of all was Woodstock, where 400,000 young people were crammed together in a sea of mud. They had something in common: drugs, music, youth.

³⁸Aldous Huxley, The Doors of Perception (New York: Harper & Row, 1954).

6. Popular culture. Music. Beatles and Bob Dylan. Rock concerts and a sense of belonging.

7. The ecology crisis. Mother nature was one mother who should not be rebelled against but rather should be loved.

8. The Decline of the Church. In the 1960's the major denominations didn't go anywhere. The dedicated churchmen built beautiful buildings but didn't have the people. To youth, who looked on, it all must have seemed foolish. God seemed to shrink as did the membership and attendance in most mainline denominational churches across the United States. All of this seems to me to be a setting for the magnets for youth — the mystic sects which were to offer love and joy to U.S. young people.

Chapter 3

THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS

HISTORICAL HERITAGE

The various cults of today have not suddenly appeared from nowhere. Robert Ellwood points out that not only do they have parallels in the phenomena of primitive and Eastern religion, but lines of influence can be traced over many centuries, and across many miles, to modern American groups.¹ Ellwood reminds us that it is impossible to understand them without an understanding of the historical heritage they bear.

It has been suggested that on the one hand, there was, both among the ancient Hebrews and the Greeks of the Homeric era, an assumption that men or tribes are each separate entities living and acting in the stream of world history and dominant over nature. This orientation, different from that of the East, led to the unique contributions of Western man to world culture, and as well to certain evils of the West.

¹Robert S. Ellwood, Jr., Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 42.

On the other hand, the West has also known a view, traceable to early contact both with India and Asiatic shamanism, developed in Platonism and Neoplatonism, which is like the cultist perspective. Grounded in Platonic wonder and amazement at Being itself, it sees the soul as separate from the body, and man as a part of nature in a monistic cosmos. A man's task is to attain to individual initiatory expansions of consciousness and awareness until he becomes mentally one with the whole cosmos.

Ellwood points to the fact that in Christianity "the two sides have been to some degree reconciled, but the first usually predominates if conflict arises."²

But just as there have been adamantly conservative Jews and Christians who have tried to hold firm to the first view without allowing any contamination of it by science and philosophy, so also there has always been in the West a minority which has veered so far in the other direction that it rejects both Christianity and normative science in favor of taking the second alternative whole. They live in a monistic, mystic world full of occult initiatory laws. It is out of this stream that the world view of modern cults comes.

²Ibid.

A BASIC WORLD VIEW

Essentially a basic world view is this: A world view is a set of presuppositions (or assumptions) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously) about the basic makeup of our world.

The first assumption everyone makes before he or she even begins to think at all is that something exists. In other words, all world views assume that something is there rather than that nothing is there. This assumption is basic and normally we don't even think about it. We assume it to be so. To accept that something is there is the beginning of two branches of philosophy: metaphysics (the study of "being") and epistemology (the study of "knowing"). One quickly learns however that once we recognize that something is there, we have not necessarily recognized "what" that something is. It is at this point that "world views" begin to form. For some, it is assumed that the only basic substance that exists is "matter." For them, everything is ultimately one thing. Others agree that everything is ultimately one thing, but assume that that one thing is Spirit or Soul or some such non-material substance.

How does one decide on a well-rounded world view? James Sire has given a series of questions which aid one

in understanding a well-rounded world view. Sire suggests that we find answers to the following questions, or that a good well-rounded world view includes basic answers to these questions:³

1. What is prime reality — the really real?
2. Who is man?
3. What happens to man at death?
4. What is the basis of morality?
5. What is the meaning of human history?

Within various basic world views other issues often arise. For example: What is the nature of the external world? Who is in charge of this world — God, or man, or man and God, or no one at all? Is man determined or is he free? How can we know and how can we know that we know? Is man alone the maker of values? Is God really good? Is God personal or impersonal? Or does he exist at all?

Though these questions seem clear for some they may be very unclear or different for another. As James Sire indicates, "We should realize that we live in a pluralistic world. What is obvious to us may be a 'lie from hell' to our neighbor next door."⁴

³James W. Sire, The Universe Next Door (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1976), p. 19.

⁴Ibid.

The problem of understanding Eastern thought is not merely one of grasping new concepts, but is one of appreciating a basically different epistemology or theory of knowledge. Western thinking has been dominated by scientific ideas of what it means to know something. A fundamental principle in this is analysis and classification through the use of reason. We understand a thing by splitting it up, somehow, into parts or causes, and then we give names to each item or of our analysis so that our knowledge is verbally communicable. We do not feel we really know something until we can represent it to ourselves as a linear progression of simple ideas or words in an analytical way. Basic to the whole process is the separation of ourselves as subject or knower from the thing we are investigating as object or the known.

An important feature of Eastern thinking, however, is its general rejection of scientific knowledge of this type. Indian and Taoist philosophy sees reality as "non-dual," that is, not divided. The world of conventional knowledge which distinguishes "the many" by divisions, analyses and words is regarded as "maya" or illusion. The basic quest, for Eastern religion, is to find release or "moksha" from this diversity and to experience the essential oneness of the universe with oneself or "samadhi." In its very nature, this experience cannot be described or analyzed in words, but one may arrive at it by various paths. This becomes

clearer when we see how this basic philosophy "monism" influences the Eastern concepts of some typical Christian doctrines. Later in this paper we will look at some specific Christian doctrines such as Creation, Time, Sin, Salvation, Jesus Christ, and the Scriptures, but first it seems important to carefully consider Basic Christian Theism and Eastern Pantheistic Monism.

CHRISTIAN THEISM

In the Western world, from the triumph of Christianity up to the end of the seventeenth century, the theistic world view was clearly dominant. Intellectual squabbles, and there were many then as now, were mostly family squabbles. Dominicans might disagree with Jesuits, Jesuits and Anglicans, Anglicans with Presbyterians and on and on. But all of these groups held to the same set of basic pre-suppositions. The Triune personal God of the Bible existed; he had revealed himself to man and could be known; the universe was his creation; man was his special creation. If battles were fought, the lines were drawn within the circle of theism. How, for example, does man know God? By reason, by revelation, by faith, by contemplation, by direct access? This battle was fought on many fronts over a dozen centuries and is still an issue with those remaining on the theistic field. Or take the issue: Is the basic

stuff of the universe matter only, form only or a combination? Theists have differed on this, too. What role does human freedom play in a universe where God is sovereign? Again, a family squabble.

During the period from the early Middle Ages to the end of the seventeenth century, a very few challenged the existence of God or held that ultimate reality was impersonal or that death meant individual extinction. This, of course, is no longer true. Pluralism has split homes as well as societies.

Each world view considers the following basic issues: the nature and character of God, the nature of the universe, the nature of man, the question of what happens to man at death, the basis of ethics and the meaning of history. In the case of theism the prime proposition concerns the nature of God. Since this first proposition is so important, more time will be given to this than to the others.

1. God is infinite and personal (Triune), transcendent and immanent, omniscient, sovereign, and good.

God is infinite: meaning beyond scope, beyond measure.

God is personal: meaning he is not mere force or energy or existent "substance." God is personality which includes self-reflection and self-determination. God thinks and God acts.

God is transcendent: meaning that he is beyond us and our world. God is "otherly."

God is immanent:	meaning that God is present, he is with us.
God is omniscient:	meaning that he is all-knowing.
God is sovereign:	meaning that he is infinite, nothing is beyond his interest, control and authority.
God is good:	meaning that he is goodness and goodness is the essence of his character. This is expressed through his holiness and through his love.

2. God created the cosmos ex nihilo to operate with a uniformity of cause and effect in an open system.
3. Man is created in the image of God and thus possesses personality, self-transcendence, intelligence, morality, gregariousness and creativity.
4. God can and does communicate with man (by general and specific revelation).
5. Man was created good, but through the Fall the image of God became defaced, though not so ruined as to be incapable of restoration; through the work of Christ God redeemed man and began the process of restoring man to goodness, though any given man may choose to reject that redemption.
6. For man death is either the gate to life with God and his people or the gate to eternal separation from the only thing that will ultimately fulfill man's aspirations.
7. Ethics is transcendent and is based on the character of God as good (holy and loving).
8. History is linear, a meaningful sequence of events leading to the fulfillment of God's purposes for man.

It seems obvious that Christian theism is primarily dependent on its concept of God, for theism holds that everything stems from him. Nothing is prior to God or equal to him. He is He Who is. Thus theism has a basis for metaphysics. Since He Who Is also has a worthy character and

is thus The Worthy One, theism has a basis for ethics. Since He Who Is also is He Who Knows, theism has a basis for epistemology. In other words, theism is a complete world view. And so the greatness of God is the central tenet of Christian theism.

EASTERN PANTHESTIC MONISM

The swing to Eastern thought is, actually and primarily a retreat from Western thought. The West ends in a maze of contradictions, acts of intellectual suicide, and a specter of nihilism that haunts the dark ages of all our thought. Many ask if there is not another way out. Indeed, there is — a very different way. With its anti-rationalism, its syncretism, its quietism, its lack of technology, its uncomplicated lifestyle and its radically different religious framework, the East is extremely attractive. Moreover, the East has an even longer tradition than the West. Sitting, as it were, next door to us for centuries have been modes of conceiving and viewing the world that are poles apart from ours. Maybe the East, that quiet land of meditating gurus and simple life, has the answer to our longing for meaning and significance.

For over a century Eastern thought has been flowing west. The Hindu and Buddhist scriptures have been translated and now circulate in inexpensive paperback editions. Knowledge

of the East is now very easy to obtain, and more and more its view of reality is becoming a live option in the West.

In this regard James Sire writes,

D. T. Suzuki from the East has poured Eastern love into Western publications. Alan Watts from the West has imbibed Zen and returned to teach his fellow Westerners. In any case, in the 1960s Eastern studies filtered down to the undergraduate level. Indian gurus have been crossing and recrossing the United States and Europe for over a decade.⁵

The recent swing to Eastern thought is painfully superficial. For more detail on this swing one might consider R. C. Zaehner, Zen, Drugs and Mysticism.⁶ Jacob Needleman's The New Religions,⁷ is a sympathetic treatment of the entire phenomenon and includes a brief description of a number of specific men and movements, including Zen, Maher Baba, Subud and Transcendental Meditation. A more expensive scholarly examination is found in essays collected in Religious Movements in Contemporary America,⁸ ed. Irving I. Zaretsky and Mark P. Leone. A sophisticated Christian critique of the Western trend toward the East is found in

⁵Ibid., p. 131.

⁶R. C. Zaehner, Zen, Drugs and Mysticism (New York: Vintage Books, 1974).

⁷Jacob Needleman, The New Religions (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970).

⁸Irving I. Zaretsky and Mark P. Leone, Religious Movements In Contemporary America (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974).

Os Guinness, The East, No Exit,⁹ an updated version of a chapter in The Dust of Death.¹⁰

The East is, of course, as rich and as hard to label and categorize as the West, as will be obvious to anyone who simply scans the table of contents of a study such as Surendranath Dasgupta's five-volume History of Indian Philosophy.¹¹ It seems wise in this paper to limit the description to the Eastern world view that is the most popular in the West: pantheistic monism. This is the root world view which underlies the Hindu Advaita Vedanta system of Shankara, the Transcendental Meditation of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the Divine Light Mission of Guru Maharaj Ji, much of the Upanishads and some Buddhist writings.

Pantheistic monism is distinguished from other related Eastern world views by its monism (the notion that only one impersonal element constitutes reality). Hare Krishna does not fit in this world view, for while it shares many of the characteristics of Eastern pantheistic monism, it has one major difference. It declares that reality is ultimately personal.

⁹Os Guinness, The East, No Exit (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1974).

¹⁰Os Guinness, The Dust of Death (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1973).

¹¹Surendranath Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922-55).

As eight presuppositions or assumptions were presented earlier in this paper for Christian Theism, so eight assumptions will now be given for Eastern Pantheistic Monism.

1. Atman is Brahman; that is, the soul of man (each and every person) is the Soul of the cosmos.

Atman is the essence, the soul, of any and every man.
Brahman is the essence, the Soul of the whole cosmos.

In this assumption, man is everything. He is actually God. However in Pantheistic terms God is the one, infinite-impersonal, ultimate reality. God is the world or cosmos. God is all that exists; nothing exists that is not God.

If anything that is not God appears to exist, it is maya, illusion, and does not truly exist.

Ultimate reality is beyond distinction; it is. One cannot express in language the nature of this oneness. We can only "realize" it by becoming it, by seizing our unity, our "god-head" and resting there beyond any distinction whatsoever.

Sire points out that "Western man is not used to this kind of system. To distinguish is to think. The laws of thought demand distinction: A is A; but A is not not -A. To know reality is to distinguish one thing from another, label it, catalog it, recognize its subtle relation to other objects in the cosmos."¹²

In the East to "know" reality is to pass beyond distinction, to "realize" the oneness of all by being one with all.

2. Some things are more one than others.

This is sort of a hierarchy of appearances. Some "things," some appearances or illusions, are closer than others to being at one with the One. Some things are more real than others.

¹²Sire, p. 133.

3. Many (if not all) roads lead to the One.

It is not a matter of finding the one true path. There are many paths from maya to reality. The problem is not to be with one another on the same path, but to be headed in the right direction on our own path.

Orientation is not so much a matter of doctrine as of technique.

Some gurus, such as the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, stress chanting a mantra — a seemingly meaningless Sanskrit word sometimes selected by one's own spiritual master and given in secret to an initiate. Others recommend meditation on a mandala — a highly structured, often fascinatingly ornate and beautiful circular image, symbol of the totality of reality. Others encourage contemplation of Zen Koans or kaiku poems until the self leaps to satori, the sudden experience of enlightenment, of unity with the One. Others require endless repetition of prayers or acts of obedience. The Guru Maharaj Ji has four techniques, one of which involves twisting the tongue backward into the throat until one tastes the divine nectar. Almost all of these techniques, however, require quiet and solitude.

One attempts to get on the level with reality, to turn one's soul to the harmony of the cosmos and ultimately to the one solid, non-harmonic, non-dual, Ultimate vibration — Brahman, the One.

4. To realize one's oneness with the cosmos is to pass beyond personality.

This notion is diametrically opposite to theism. In theism personality is the chief thing about God and the chief thing about man. It means that individual man has complexity at the essence of his being. Personality demands self-consciousness and self-determinacy, and these involve duality — a thinker and a thing thought. Both God and man in theism are complex.

In pantheism the chief thing about God is his Oneness, his sheer abstract, undifferentiated non-dual unity.

5. To realize one's oneness with the cosmos is to pass beyond knowledge. The principle of non-contradiction does not apply where ultimate reality is concerned.

Reality is one; language requires duality, several dualities in fact (speaker and listener; subject and predicate); language cannot convey the truth about reality.

In short, we are back to technique — the substance of much of Eastern concern.

6. To realize one's oneness with the cosmos is to pass beyond good and evil; the cosmos is perfect at every moment.

Karma is the notion that one's present fate, his pleasure or pain, is the result of past action, especially in a former existence. It is then tied to the notion of reincarnation which follows from the general principle that nothing that is real (that is, no soul) ever passes out of existence.

The soul will never not be. All soul is eternal, for all soul is essentially Soul and thus forever the One. On its way back to the One, however, it goes through whatever series of illusory forms its past action requires.

Karma is the Eastern version of "you sow what you reap." But karma implies necessity. If you have "sinned" there is no God to cancel the debt and to forgive.

Two things should be noted about this system. First, the basis for doing good is not so that the good will be done or so that you benefit another person. Karma demands that every soul suffer for its past "sins" so there is no value in alleviating suffering. The soul will have to suffer later.

One does good deeds in order to attain unity with the One. Doing good is first and foremost a self-helping way of life.

Secondly, all actions are merely part of the whole world of illusion. The only "real" reality is ultimate reality, and that is beyond differentiation, beyond good and evil. Everything is good.

7. Death is the end of individual, personal existence, but it changes nothing essential in man's nature.

Human death signals the end of an individual embodiment of Atman; it signals as well the end of a person. But the soul, Atman, is indestructible. No man in the sense of individual or person survives his death. Atman survives, but Atman is impersonal. When Atman is reincarnated, it becomes another person.

8. To realize one's oneness with the One is to pass beyond time. Time is unreal. History is cyclical.

This should help explain why Western Christians who place so much emphasis on history find their presentation of the historical basis of Christianity almost completely ignored in the East. To the Western mind, whether or not Jesus existed, performed miracles, healed the sick, died and rose from the dead is important. If it happened, there must be a vital meaning to these strange, unnatural events. Perhaps there is a God after all. To the Eastern mind, the whole argument is superfluous. Yesterday's facts are not meaningful in themselves. They do not bear on me today unless they have a here-and-now meaning; and if they have a here-and-now meaning, then their facticity as history is of no concern.

The Eastern scriptures are filled with parables, fables, stories, myth, songs, hymns, epics, and the like, but almost no history in the sense of events recorded because they took place in an unrepeatable space-time context.

There is a great-range in Hindu theology. Seen one way there are as many gods as there are Indians. But although the early stage showed a strong polytheism and the Bhaktis still provide a reaction to a personal theism, the highest and most influential stage (and certainly the most

intellectually consistent) is the concept of monism.

Os Guinness, reminds us that,

From the ninth-century philosophy of Shankara through the nineteenth-century vision of Vivekenanda to the twentieth-century and the Maharishi and Radakrishnan, the mainstream of Indian thought has been Advaita or non-dualist, Vedanta, a pure monism.

Guinness feels that this is still the most vital school in modern India, although it is certainly true that other varieties of Hinduism, not to speak of Buddhism, have vastly differing ontologies. In The Bhagavad Gita, we read,

Weapons cannot hurt the Spirit and fire can never burn him. Untouched is he by drenching waters, untouched is he by parching winds. Beyond the power of sword and fire, beyond the power of waters and winds, the Spirit is everlasting, omnipresent, neverchanging, never moving, ever One.¹³

Monism is the doctrine that there is only one kind of substance or ultimate reality, as mind or matter. The doctrine that reality is one unitary, organic whole, with no independent parts. Pantheism is the doctrine that the universe, taken or conceived as a whole, is God; the doctrine that there is no God but the combined forces and laws which are manifested in the existing universe.¹⁴

Pat Means presents three distinctives which he feels that mystics share in common: first, he says, a

¹³ Juan Mascaro, The Bhagavad Gita (Hammondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962), p. 50.

¹⁴ Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, MA: Merriam 1949), p. 544 & 655.

pantheistic view of God, secondly, a subjective approach to truth and, third, an emphasis on experience rather than reason.¹⁵ Os Guinness divides his presentation into three as well; only he suggests first Monism and reality; second Monism and personality; and thirdly Monism and morality.¹⁶ Means writes,

The pantheistic world view is the one which prevails in the East. The pantheist would agree with the materialist that there is just one level of reality. There is indeed no 'spiritual reality' or God who is apart from the material world. 'Rather,' says the pantheist, 'God and the material world are one and the same. God is the sum total of all there is. He is not a separate being somewhere beyond the world; rather, all of the material world, everyone and everything in it is part of the Divine.'¹⁷

According to Means the modern mystic holds to the pantheistic world view and thus believes that God, man and nature all share the same divine essence. There is no God "out there" to relate to; there is only one's inner divinity to discover.

The process of realizing one's own divinity is described in mystic circles in various ways — "self-realization," "god-realization," "development of God-consciousness" but all the terms really refer to the same self-deifying process. Various groups recommend various techniques for achieving the goal. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, for example, claims, "He who practices Transcendental

¹⁵Means, p. 23.

¹⁶Guinness, The East No Exit p. 32ff.

¹⁷Mean, p. 24.

Meditation becomes acquainted with the inner divine consciousness."

It would be valuable to examine Indian monism in relation to the three aspects Guinness presented, namely, Monism and reality, personality, and morality. First, if unity alone is real, then what is the world of diversity or the phenomenal external universe as we know it? Early Vedantism, which was polytheistic, explained this in the picture of a spider spinning its web or of a fire throwing out sparks. But as monism developed, the relation of God to his world was described in terms of a dreamer (who alone was real) and his dream (which was unreal). Again, the phenomenal world as we know it is maya, whose root meaning in Sanskrit is to measure or classify. Maya, the world of scientific phenomena, is illusion, ignorance and shadow, a world where individuality and diversity are thought to be real but are not. The trend from polytheism to monism has led increasingly to the stress on the unreality of the universe as we know it. So it seems to me that a problem is presented. Monism as related to reality does not give a sufficient basis on which to ground continuing scientific investigation or to distinguish between fantasy and reality.

In relation to personality, consideration should be given to the Hindu view of man's being. If the unity,

God or Brahman, alone is all-important and the world of diversity is maya, then what is man? Shankara's answer is simple: "Who are you? Who am I? Whence have I come? Who is my mother? Who is my father? Think of all this as having no substance, leave it all as the stuff of dream."¹⁸

Within this framework man is the extension of God's essence into the world of diversity in the sense of the dream, the dance or hide-and-seek. Monism does not see man's dilemma as moral (in terms of what he has done) but as metaphysical (in terms of who he is). Monism thus leads to the notion that a man cannot be helped as an individual because his individuality is the essential problem. He must be helped "from" his individuality; he must merge with the Absolute.

Finally, if man's dilemma is metaphysical and not moral, what is left of morality? Monism says that good and evil are only distinct because of maya. There are no moral absolutes; moral values are only relatively true or sociologically useful and the question of ethics is only the question of optimal game rules. Alan Watts likens the moral situation to a play. On stage, you see the "good man" fighting the "bad man," although you know that back-stage the actors are the best of friends. Only in this life do you believe in good and evil as real and distinct.

¹⁸Zaehner, p. 178.

Backstage, God and Satan are the best of friends. Within the framework of monism God contains both good and evil. Brahman (the Absolute or Universal Self) is blankly indifferent to all human experience and suffering.

Why and how, then do I fight injustice or moral evil? The answer to this is somewhat pessimistic. Since life on earth is the metaphysical hassle of samsara, suffering is the norm of life on the wheel. My suffering is the result of my karma, the just desserts from my previous incarnation.

I would raise the questions in response to the above outlined thoughts on Monism, "Can we afford a view which rejects the reality of the physical universe?" "Can we afford a view which contains so radical a negation of individual personality and which fails to support or give credence to human community?" "Can we afford a view of morality that is relative at its best and at its worst produces resignation and withdrawal, both tendencies tantamount to cultural suicide for Western man in his present impasse?"

The controversy between Christianity and Eastern mysticism lies in the realm of epistemology (the philosophy of knowing) and its theological corollary, that is how we know God. The problem of knowledge, how we attain it, how we measure its reliability, has dominated philosophy

for centuries. At present a line is usually drawn between two types of knowledge which are held to be categorically different. The first, emphasized by the logical-empiricist school, we may call objective knowledge. It comprises matters of fact which can be verified by the strict canons of logic and empirical observation. The second type of knowledge, emphasized by existentialists, we may call subjective. It embraces all those areas of human feeling and value judgment which cannot be verified in the way the empiricists demand. In ordinary speech, for instance, we may say, "I know that tomatoes are red" (an objective fact) but also, "I know fear" (a subjective feeling). The correctness of this division into objective and subjective dimensions is deeply ingrained in Western thought. It is reflected in the division of university faculties into "sciences" (objective) and "arts" (subjective).

Until very recently it was generally assumed that objective scientific knowledge was somehow more reliable and true than value judgments and experience. At least this was so in the West. However, as we have seen, Eastern thought diverges markedly from the West on this issue. The maya is the objective conventional world. But Eastern thought regards this objective world as essentially unreal. It gives by far the greater significance to the subjective, experiential kind of human knowledge.

R. D. Clements tells us that,

Today we are witnessing an energetic reaction against the logical-empiricist type of philosophy. Science faculties cannot find students to fill their places, and existentialists are greatly influencing literature and art.¹⁹

Os Guinness charges,

Here we can ask whether Christianity is really a 'meta-physical filibuster' as Alan Watts charges, or whether the lemming-like suicidal rush from the truth of historic Christianity has drowned its meaning and message. It is a perverse fact that what people scornfully reject in Christianity (such as non-material supernatural), they welcome with open arms in Eastern mysticism.²⁰

It must be clear to a Christian that in at least one sphere of knowledge — the theological one of knowing God — the truth cannot lie either with the logical-empiricists or with the mystics. God cannot be worked out logically or experimented on, as if he were the object of some scientific enquiry. Yet neither can a Christian accept the view that God is a feeling or value judgment like fear or joy that originates within man. God does not cease to exist when I cease to know him. This cannot be squeezed into the objective or the subjective category and seems to bridge the two.

The deists effectively made God into a kind of logical deduction. Even very orthodox theologians of the

¹⁹R. D. Clements, God and the Gurus (Downers Grove: IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975).

²⁰Guinness, The East, No Exit, p. 46.

last century tried to prove the existence of God from their observation of the universe. But such attempts to rationalize God could not result in a man's truly knowing God in the personal sense which the Bible describes.

Others turn God into a feeling. Existentialist theologians tend to be indifferent to the historical veracity of the Bible because for them, the encounter with God is essentially subjective. Whether the story that produces this sense of God is historically true is of no real importance to them. The existentialists have done great service to theology in drawing us back to an awareness that faith is a distinctively "human" phenomenon. The knowledge of the empiricists could equally well be gained by a computer as by a man. What may be needed is an epistemology that overcomes the antagonism between fact and feeling — a bridge between West and East. There seems to be a need for a synthesis of empiricism and existentialism.

R. D. Clements, gives a simple analogy that will illustrate one sort of approach that seems fitting.²¹ He considers human vision. When looking at an object, as well as seeing the detail upon which our eyes have focused, we also see a large surrounding area, the so-called peripheral zone. Human knowledge seems a bit like that. Science and

²¹Clements, p. 48.

empiricism concentrate their gaze on the things on which our minds can focus clearly. There is a vast field of peripheral awareness, however, which cannot be tied down in scientific terms. We may call it "existential awareness," the feelings and intuitions which a computer cannot share because it is not human. But the fact that we cannot bring these perceptions into sharp focus in the same way as scientific facts does not mean that they are imaginary, any more than it would be true to say central vision is more real than peripheral. Neither is it right to draw a sharp qualitative distinction between the two types of seeing. The fact is that they always go together and even overlap.

This is best exemplified, perhaps, in the human experience of recognizing a pattern (so-called gestalt perception). Consider, for instance, how we recognize another person's face in a photograph. If we were to concentrate on individual aspects on which we can focus — the eyes, the mouth — we would fail to recognize the person. Those magazine competitions where one has to match the eyes and lips of famous people prove this point. We recognize one another by a kind of combined central and peripheral vision. The same is true of reading; if one stares long enough at a word, it somehow loses its familiarity. Similarly, if one purposely defocuses one's eyes, the word gets lost in a blur. We make sense of words by

combining a "look at" with a "look around" the letters.

The two poles of objective and subjective knowledge are not mutually exclusive, but are more like the foci of the ellipse of total human awareness. They complement one another. Certainly such an epistemology seems nearer to the type of knowing to which the Bible refers when it speaks of knowing God. The deists made the mistake of believing only their central cognitive vision. God thus became a mere collection of deduced attributes like the isolated features of some celebrity in a magazine competition. The mystics make the equally disastrous mistake of purposely defocusing their minds in an attempt to erase the central awareness and exploit the peripheral.

The Bible insists that we must come to God as a person to be recognized. Only then can we know him. Knowledge of God in the Bible is neither empiricist nor mystic; it is personal. God is a personal, self-conscious Being. Persons are objective realities. They do not exist only in our experiences of them. We encounter them through the gateway of empirical knowledge as we see and hear them. Yet, if we treat persons only as objects, we will never really know them. We may know their height and the color of their hair, but we will never experience that distinctively human knowing which we usually call a personal relationship. To enter that relationship means to be

involved subjectively with the person in a mutual knowing and being known. This seems to be what lies behind Jesus' words, "If you have known me, you would have known my Father also" (John 14:7).

Also, the issue seems to center around the doctrine of revelation. Some of the existentialist theologians have reemphasized in a salutary manner the importance of subjective illumination in the process of coming to faith. The Bible speaks of revelation in both its objective and its subjective dimensions — the Word and the Spirit.

The previous Western preoccupation with scientific knowledge has been reflected in a general emphasis by biblical Christians on the importance of "the Word of Truth." The current swing toward subjectivity has not surprisingly been paralleled by a renewed interest in "the spirit." But the Word and the Spirit cannot be separated. It seems to me that the Bible teaches us that the personal God is encountered through objective revelation in the empirical realm of ordinary sense perceptions. We see his acts and hear his words, as we do those of other persons. The Word of objective revelation is there in creation, in history, in Jesus Christ, and of course in Scripture. The Christian cannot be indifferent, therefore, to the objective veracity of the historical events and to the Scriptures which mediate God's person to man. Yet knowing about God is not knowing

him. The Word must be applied to the heart and mind subjectively by the Spirit, so that a man recognizes the person behind the mighty acts and words and enters into a personal relationship with him (Mt. 11:25-27; I Cor. 2:6-16; II Cor. 3:12; 4:6).

God acts in revelation within the range of both the objective and the subjective focus of human cognition. He must do so, because he is not just a fact to be believed or a feeling to be experienced, but a person to be recognized, trusted and loved.

JESUS CHRIST: GOD OR GURU

Faye Levine writes,

Lord Jesus the son of the Supreme Absolute Truth. And Krishna is the Father. He is the source: Krishna says, 'I am the source of everything, From me the entire creation flows. Knowing this, the wise worship me with all their hearts.' So Krishna is the Supreme Father, and every other living entity is his part and parcel, or his son.²²

Guru Maharaj Ji writes,

So Jesus is living, right! Jesus is living, Ram is living now, Krishna is living now, Buddha is living now, but they have all been united into one very powerful power. And when this power spreads its hand...all the things that are going on wrong in this world are going to be abolished.²³

²²Faye Levine, The Strange World of the Hare Krishna (New York: Fawcett, 1974), p. 102.

²³Sun Myung Moon, The Divine Principle (New York: Holy Spirit Association for Unification of World Christianity, 1973), p. 212.

The Bible teaches that Jesus was absolutely unique. The whole of the Old Testament history pointed forward to him, and the church he founded must look back to him continually in the communion supper he inaugurated (Lk. 24:44-47; I Cor. 11:23-26). This was because he came not only to teach, but to accomplish salvation for men by means of his death on the cross and his resurrection (Lk. 19:10; Rom. 5:8). The Bible makes it clear that, though he was perfect man, he was also the eternal personal self-expression of the Godhead (Jn. 1:1; Col. 1:15). The mystery of the Trinity reveals that within God there is a complex of three self-conscious persons and Jesus was the incarnation of the second of those persons — God's Son. That he should be perfect God and perfect man was necessary if he was to accomplish salvation for sinful men and women (Heb. 7:15-28).

Eastern religions give considerable attention to the appearance of incarnations of "god" in history, though these are by no means essential to the underlying monistic philosophy we have already outlined. Rather, it is that certain types of Hinduism (using bhakti yoga) and one particular branch of Buddhism (Mahayana) have as a central element in their pathway to enlightenment devotion to an avatar, that is, a personal incarnation of "god." It is a common belief that through the grace of one of these

avatars an individual can be granted enlightenment. These incarnations do not accomplish anything to secure salvation, but while they are in the world the faithful disciple may seek the experience of enlightenment from them. They act as transmitters of the enlightenment experience, not as saviors who make redemption possible. They are not unique, though it seems to be generally believed that there can be only one true incarnation at any particular time.

Probably most confusing for the Christian is the fact that virtually all of the new eastern sects honor Christ as being "divine" and a "savior." In fact they all "believe" in Jesus. But the question is, which Jesus do they believe in? As Detrich Bonhoeffer would present the question more specifically, "Who Is Jesus Christ, not what is Jesus Christ?" To answer that, let's take a look at the profile of Jesus that emerges from the mystical subculture.

Many of the ideas about Christ that are prevalent in mystical circles come from a fabricated biography of His life called The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ. According to The Aquarian Gospel, much of the early influence in Jesus' life was from the mystic East. Jesus according to this thinking, is said to have been steeped in the teachings of the mystic orient, and He became fully-developed in yogi and a spiritual master. The mystic would insist that when Jesus said, "the kingdom of God is within you," He was

teaching the inner divinity of all men. So, The Aquarian Gospel teaches that Jesus was a person heavily influenced by eastern and occult thought in His early years.

The Hindu concept of the "avatar," or "divine Savior," developed fairly late in the history of eastern religion. The biblical concept of Jesus as Savior is different in at least three ways from the Hindu concept of the avatar:

1. Jesus is a permanent Savior. In the eastern view, a new avatar is needed in every age "whenever there is a decline of religion."²⁴ In the Bhagavad-Gita, Krishna says, "In every age I come back To deliver the holy, To destroy the sins of the sinner, To establish righteousness."²⁵ By contrast, Hebrews 10:12 tells us that Christ "offered one sacrifice for sins for all time." The result is that "we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).

2. Jesus is a uniquely qualified Savior. There are about 22 different avatars mentioned in the Bahagavad-Gita alone, and every one of them is considered to be equally divine. As one Indian monk says, "It is one and the same Savior that, having plunged into the ocean of life, rises up

²⁴Huston Smith, The Religions of Man (New York: New American Library, 1959), p. 87.

²⁵Mascaro, p. 50.

in one place and is known as Krishna...and diving down in another place and is known as Christ."²⁶ A common eastern belief is that there is one eternal "Christ spirit" that merely inhabits a new body in each age. The Bible, however, describes Jesus as God's "only begotten Son" (John 3:16). And in answer to this question, "Can men be saved just as easily in the name of Krishna, Rama, or Buddha?" the New Testament says regarding Jesus: "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Jesus is not only unique in His divinity, but also in His sinlessness.

3. Jesus is an atoning Savior. In a little metaphysical word-play, the eastern cults refer to the avatar's purpose as being not to make "atonement" for man's sin, but to help man experience "at-one-ment" with God. Man's problem is not sin, they say, but ignorance of his own divinity. Therefore, the avatar's purpose is not to atone for sin, but to teach and guide spiritual seekers toward gradual enlightenment. One of the supposed sages in the Aquarian Gospel puts it this way: "There are no supernatural acts of God to lift a man from the carnal life to spirit blessedness; he grows as grows the plant, and in due time is perfected."²⁷ But Jesus was far more than some glorified

²⁶Smith, p. 87.

²⁷Dowling, L. H., The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ, (London: Fowler, 1911), p. 100.

guide. The Bible teaches that He was God's unique Son, sent as an atonement for our sins. The Hindu avatar is not a "savior" because he can't save anyone. He merely tried to point the way: the individual has to "save" himself. Buddhism adopted the avatar idea from Hinduism and turned it into the concept of the "Bodhisattva." The Bodhisattva is one who has reached Enlightenment, but who sacrifices his right to enter Nirvana in order to point others to the way. The issue it seems to me in our day in relation to the person of Jesus Christ is not so much the truthfulness of Christ's claims, but their uniqueness! The mystics are willing to honor Jesus as an incarnation of God, a Savior, the Truth, as long as He agrees to be one of many incarnations, one of many saviors, and one of many truths.

Klaus Klostermaier analyzes the East's condescending acceptance of Jesus Christ this way:

Men reject him because he unmasks their lies and hypocrisy, because he cannot be bribed. They would be willing to place him next to the gods to offer him incense, even a little money, to cleanse themselves of sin. They would like to have him as a statue — but not as a man, not as immediate and provoking.²⁸

The issue of the "tolerance" of the eastern religions and the seeming "intolerance" of Christianity is central here. Os Guinness, exposes the fallacy of that

²⁸ Klostermaier, Klaus, Hindu and Christian in Vrindaban (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), p. 49ff.

comparison in this superb analysis:

If Christianity is true, Hinduism cannot be true in the sense it claims. Even though on the surface it appears that Hinduism is more tolerant, both finally demand an ultimate choice. Many Indians admit this. Some speak of the subtlety of Hindu toleration as the 'kiss of death.' Radakrishnan has described it as 'being strangled by the fraternal embrace'...The best way for Hinduism to contain the rampant reform movement of Buddhism in India was to declare that the Buddha was only a further avatar of Krishna. Buddha's uniqueness was thus 'strangled by the fraternal embrace.'²⁹

Alan Watts, who had previously attempted a synthesis, eventually admitted,

Any attempt to marry the Vedanta to Christianity must take full account of the fact that Christianity is a contentious faith which requires an all-or-nothing commitment...My previous discussions did not take proper account of that whole aspect of Christianity which is uncompromising, ornery, militant, rigorous, imperious, and invincibly self-righteous.³⁰

Naturally, a Christian must remember that such "intolerance" must be an intolerance of principle: it must never become an intolerance against the people who hold the alternative views.

THE QUESTION OF SIN

Is man merely suffering from a metaphysical identity crisis, from a problem centered in his mind? Or is there a deeper problem that the Bible calls "sin," a disease rooted in our very nature? The spiritual path of every individual

²⁹ Guinness, The East, No Exit, p. 55.

³⁰ Alan Watts, Beyond Theology (New York: Pantheon, 1964), p. 12.

will be directly determined by his or her answer to these questions.

Notice, for example, how the manner in which TM head, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, views the human dilemma dictates his particular solution:

Although we are all 100% Divine, consciously we do not know that we are Divine...and we suffer on the conscious level. On the level of the Transcendental Consciousness we are Divine already. So suffering on the conscious level has to be eradicated, because that is the main suffering. Meditation, just a few minutes morning and evening, and no suffering will be there.³¹

Meditation is certainly a painless solution, claims Maharishi, and "very easily a sinner comes out of the field of sin and becomes a virtuous man."³² Hundreds of thousands of westerners are buying the eastern solution today without ever realizing that the various systems of eastern meditation they are subscribing to are directly linked to a specific view of the human dilemma. At the heart of this view is the eastern belief in monism — the oneness of all things.

In eastern thought, then, it is ignorance, not sin or self-will that lies at the heart of the human dilemma. Zen master D. T. Suzuki explains it this way: "To think that there is the self is the start of all errors and evils.

³¹ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Meditations (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), pp. 177, 178.

³² Ibid., p. 119.

Ignorance is at the root of all things that go wrong."³³

In Zen, the ignorance lying at the heart of our problems pertains to who we are not: we are not a separate self. In yoga, it involves who we are, we are divine, actually part of the One. And, according to Gopi Krishna, "This is the purpose for which you and I are here — to realize ourselves...to bring the soul to a clear realization of its own divine nature."³⁴

Along with the deification of man in eastern thought comes the elimination of all concept of a personal God. There is thus no God with absolute standards to be sinned against. "Anything that has the semblance of an external authority is rejected by Zen,"³⁵ explains Suzuki. "Zen wants absolute freedom, even from God."³⁶

Ironically, while desiring to free itself from the yoke of a personal God, eastern mysticism merely exchanges one "external authority" for another. And the new authority, the law of Karma, is a merciless master.

Karma is the iron-clad law of cause and effect that rules the universe. What a man sows, he also reaps — if not in this life, then perhaps in the next, or the next. For the handmaiden of the law of Karma is the doctrine of

³³D. T. Suzuki, Mysticism, Christian and Buddhist (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), p. 153.

³⁴Ibid., p. 103. ³⁵Ibid., p. 44. ³⁶Ibid., p. 97.

reincarnation which holds that when a man dies, his or her soul passes into a new body and is reborn, complete with the good or bad Karma accumulated up to that point.

Man thus lives out his existence in a virtually endless cycle of birth and rebirths on a sort of treadmill referred to as the "wheel of samsara." Bad Karma accumulated on the wheel must be worked out by performing deeds of righteousness (dharma in Sanskrit) and by spiritually purifying oneself through meditation.

Jesus Christ flatly rejected the concept of Karma when asked by his disciples about a man who was born blind, whether his affliction was a result of his own sin or that of his parents, Jesus replied, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents..."³⁷

In eastern thought, man is just a part of the oneness of the universal soul (atman). He cannot be alienated from that oneness by moral disobedience, since it is a oneness of essence, not just of interpersonal relationship. The Brahman-atman is not a personal transcendent being and is therefore incapable of being offended. Sin, for the Eastern thinker, is essentially the ignorance, as has been already pointed out, that prevents a man from realizing his oneness with everything else. It is the root of all discontent, for discontent is derived from the desire to

³⁷John 9:1-3.

grasp and to hold on to things, be they material possessions or intellectual ideas or personal friendships. This of course can be overcome only by attaining enlightenment. Failure to achieve such release condemns man to a continual process of rebirth into other forms of life (samsara).

Christ's view of the effect of sin is at once far less drastic and yet far more drastic than the eastern view. It is less drastic in that He repudiates the idea that a man has to suffer the consequences of accumulated sins over the course of a thousand incarnations. It is appointed to a man to die only once, the Bible affirms. But the effect of sin on man is far more devastating at the same time. The Bible also points out that "the wages of sin is death." The death the Bible is referring to here is the death of a man's spirit. Ultimately, it is the cross of Jesus Christ that looms as the great divider between mysticism and Christianity.

TIME, SALVATION AND THE SCRIPTURES

The dismemberment of the one into the many continues forever in eras of one kalpa each in length (4,320,000,000 years).³⁸ Within these great periods some Hindu groups see significance in astrological ages. Due to the precession of the equinoxes, the signs of the zodiac are not perfectly

³⁸Clements, p. 9.

stationary relative to the solar year. From about A.D. 200-2300 is the age of Pisces the Fish, which some link with the dominance of Christianity. Around A.D. 2300, however, we move into the age of Aquarius, thought by many to signal a time of great peace and harmony. Thus, for Eastern philosophy generally, time is cyclic.

In biblical thought, however, time, which is part of the created order, is finite and linear. It progresses from creation, the beginning (Greek *arche*), to an end goal (Greek *telos*) with a definite purpose. This is because the Creator is personal, transcendent, non-capricious and has a plan (Eph. 3:11).

Salvation, for the Eastern thinker, is the experience of the "oneness" of himself with all things. This is enlightenment (various Hindu and Buddhist terms are used for this experience, for example, *moksha*, *samadhi*, *satori*). Such an experience cannot be verbalized; one can only enter into it. But it is not far from any man since, through his innermost soul, he shares in that essential oneness which underlies the external universe. Salvation is thus a matter of realizing what we are, rather than of becoming what we should be. The word realizing, though, should not lead us to conceive of this enlightenment as a self-conscious piece of subject-object cognition. Rather by its very nature, it requires the loss of the personal ego-consciousness of the one who

is experiencing it. Hence the famous statement of the enlightened one, "I am Buddha" or "I am Brahman."

All the complexities of Eastern religion derive from the many different methods of attaining this mystical experience where self-consciousness merges into cosmic-consciousness. The Hindu term for these different roads to enlightenment or union is yoga. Perhaps the best known types of yoga are those that involve meditative discipline, but there are many others. Some branches of Eastern religion have turned practically every sort of human activity into a yoga that leads to enlightenment. For the intellectual gymnast there are "jnan yoga" and the subtleties of Zen Buddhism. Good works are given a place in "karma yoga," although it is important to understand that the moral effort involved in this discipline is motivated by expediency, not by genuine altruism. Good "karma" takes a person nearer enlightenment; bad "karma" takes one a step down in the next incarnation. Perhaps the most significant pathway to enlightenment in the recent Western movements is "bhakti yoga." This involves religious devotion and service to a spiritual master. It seems to me that this is the nearest that Eastern thought gets to a "personal" relationship with "god." All, however, have in common the idea that a man or woman finds his or her own salvation through personal discipline and effort, and that this enlightenment has

nothing to do with "moral" issues.

Naturally the situation for the Christian is very different. The Bible teaches that persons stand in need of salvation primarily from moral failure, and only secondarily from ignorance of God. A person can know God personally when moral sinfulness has been dealt with. It is the Christian belief that in Jesus Christ God has provided a means for the forgiveness of sins, since persons were morally impotent to save themselves.

The Vedic literature of Hinduism is enormous enough to daunt all but the most determined reader. In addition to this canonical literature (the Vedas), however there is a large body of further commentary on the Vedas, usually called the Vedantic literature. Much of this relates to the personal incarnations of Brahman and to Bhakti devotion to these incarnations as a way to enlightenment. One of the most influential books in this field is the Bhagavad Gita, which relates the stories of Krishna (an incarnation) and where the idea of love for "god" finds clear expression.

In contrast, the Bible clearly regards itself as the revelation of the personal transcendent God who is able to speak as subject to persons as objects. The Bible is the authoritative record and interpreter of the saving and revealing acts of God in history, and as such makes propositional statements about the creator and purpose of God

which are true, though the finiteness of the human intellect may require that God sometimes accommodate what he says about himself to our limited understanding. A person may be a Hindu and even attain enlightenment with no intellectual knowledge of the Vedas. But to be a Christian a man must know something about God and about the way of salvation, and ultimately this must come from the Bible.

Chapter 4

AN EVANGELICAL RESPONSE

All Christians everywhere, whatever their cultural background or theological persuasion, must think at some time or other about the relation between the church and the world. Whether our particular context is the post-Christian secularism of the so-called free world, or some form of Marxism in the Communist block, or a culture permeated by Hinduism, Buddhism or Islam in one of the nations of the Third World, the same unavoidable questions trouble the Christian conscience: what should be the church's relation to the world? What is a Christian's responsibility towards his non-Christian relatives, friends and neighbors, and indeed to the whole non-Christian community? First we might consider the concept of the church and then perhaps some consideration of five key words suggested by John R. W. Stott.¹

Rudolf Bultmann, one of the great scholars in the field of New Testament study, has said, "In Christianity,

¹John R. W. Stott, Christian Mission in the Modern World (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1975).

These five key words Stott discussed are Mission, Evangelism, Dialogue, Salvation, and Conversion.

the individual believer stands within the congregation, and the individual congregations are joined together into one Congregation — the Church."² The church has been a subject of long debate and much misunderstanding. In recent years there have arisen many critics who have helped force a clearer understanding of what the church is and what it should be. Harvey Cox wrote,

In their organization, their theology, and their ways of relating to the world, our churches today are for the most part merely richer and shinier versions of their nineteenth century parents. Their organization (residential parishes) is based on the sociological patterns of about 1850...Their Sunday-at-eleven culture is timed to fall between the two milking hours in the agricultural society. Sermons remain one of the last forms of public discourse where it is culturally forbidden to talk back...the church remains a patriarchal, agricultural, prescientific relic.³

William Watson wrote a poem entitled "The Church Today" in which he said, "Outwardly splendid, as of old, inwardly sparkless, void and cold, her face and fire all spent and gone, like the dead moon, she still lives on!"

And yet in spite of the avalanche of criticisms presented to us constantly, the fact remains that the people of the United States are very religious. This has become obvious with rising cults attracting thousands of young Americans today and with even the recent Gallup survey

²Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 93.

³Harvey Cox, The Secular City (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 130.

showing that 71 percent of adults (eighteen or older) were members of a church or synagogue. According to C. Peter Wagner, associate professor of church growth at Fuller Seminary School of World Mission, "This is quite remarkable, given the fact that the government officially neither requires nor encourages any particular religious belief."⁴ Wagner continues by saying,

More American people attend church in an average week than attend all professional baseball, basketball, and football games combined in the average year. All athletic events of all kinds, professional and amateur, draw about 5.5 million spectators per week, while churches draw 85 million worshippers in the same week.⁵

Much of the problems centered around the criticisms of the church is simply a lack of understanding of what the church is, the goals of the church and the MISSION of the church.

Werner George Kummel said, "The Church is Christianity as a whole, the Body of Christ, the Bride of the Lord — a spiritual entity, unrelated to earthly norms, including law."⁶

What specifically is the purpose or MISSION of the church especially in relation to the Eastern thought which we have been looking at? John Stott suggests that there

⁴C. Peter Wagner, "How Christian Is America?" Christianity Today XXI (December 3, 1976), p. 12.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Werner George Kummel, The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems (New York: Abingdon Press, 1970), pp. 215, 216.

seem to be two extremes in this thinking. The older or traditional view he feels has been to equate mission and evangelism, missionaries and evangelists, missions and evangelistic programs. In this extreme form this older view of mission as consisting exclusively of evangelism and concentrating on verbal proclamation. The missionary was often caricatured as standing under a palm tree, wearing a sola topi, and declaiming the gospel to a group of ill-clad natives sitting respectfully round him on the ground. This traditional view is far from being dead and buried. The so-called 'Jesus movement' has encouraged the formation of Christian communes into which zealous young evangelicals withdraw from the wicked world. To these people the world is like a building on fire, they say; a Christian's only duty is to mount a rescue operation before it is too late. Jesus is coming at any moment; there is no point in tampering with the structures of society, for society is doomed and about to be destroyed. Besides, any attempt to improve society is bound to be unproductive since unrenewed men cannot build a new world. Man's only hope lies in being "born again."

The opposite extreme to this concept of mission is an extreme ecumenical viewpoint. The general thesis of this viewpoint is that God is at work in the historical process, that the purpose of his mission, is the establishment

of Shalom or peace in the sense of social harmony. Moreover, in working towards this goal God uses men and women both inside and outside the churches, and the church's particular role in the mission of God is to point to God at work in world history, to discover what he is doing, to catch up with it and to get involved in it ourselves.

From the traditional view of mission as exclusively evangelistic and the ecumenical view of it as the establishment of peace, we ask if there is a better way, a more balanced and more biblical way of defining the mission of the church and relating to one another the evangelistic and social responsibilities of the people of God.

W. A. Visser t'Hooft is quoted as saying,

I believe that, with regard to the great tension between the vertical interpretation of the Gospel as essentially concerned with God's saving action in the life of individuals, and the horizontal interpretation of it as mainly concerned with human relationships in the world, we must get out of that rather primitive oscillating movement of going from extreme to the other, which is not worthy of a movement which by its nature seeks to embrace the truth of the gospel in its fullness. A Christianity which has lost its vertical dimension has lost its salt and is not only insipid in itself, but useless for the world. But a Christianity which would use the vertical preoccupation as a means to escape from its responsibility for and in the common life of man is a denial of the incarnation of God's love for the world manifested in Christ.⁷

It is not just that the great commission includes a duty to teach converts everything Jesus had previously

⁷Stott, p. 20.

commanded (Matthew 28:20), and that social responsibility is among the things which Jesus commanded. There is not only the consequence of the commission, but the actual commission itself must be understood to include social as well as evangelistic responsibility, unless we are to be guilty of distorting the words of Jesus.

Along these lines there are at least four goals which seem important as given by Bruce Larson and Ralph Osborne.⁸ They are: 1) One's Relationship to God; 2) One's Relationship to Himself; 3) One's Relationship to the Significant Others in His or Her life; and 4) One's Relationship to the World. It has been my experience to notice that those of more liberal tradition seem to get very caught up in the third and fourth goal given above (One's Relationship to Significant Others and One's Relationship to the World) and those from the more conservative or evangelical tradition seem to become overly involved in the first two goals (One's Relationship to God and One's Relationship to Himself). What seems to me to be needed is a balance of all four goals. Only when we have these four aspects in proper place can we even begin to think of our response to Eastern Thinking. If we do not have our own thinking together as a total

⁸Bruce Larson and Ralph Osborne, The Emerging Church (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1970).

Christian Community, how can we begin to try to combat or react appropriately toward those who differ more radically.

As we consider that the church is the body of ALL believers it is important that we remember that we must be a people-oriented community. We must experience a greater openness to sharing in congregational gatherings. We must become more aware of the growing interest in small groups.

Evangelicals need to become more world-need conscious and more open, whereas liberals will need to be more defined in their Biblical position and tolerant of the stance of Evangelical Christians. We will need to become more creative in our approach to modern man and his or her needs. We will need to experience the building of trust, honesty, acceptance, appreciation, openness, vulnerability, affirmation, involvement, service and obedience as well as worship and teaching within our church.

Only then can we as a Christian community respond to the growing Eastern Thought which is making such a strong impact upon Western Theology. Only when we begin to accomplish the goals that have been suggested, will we stand in the community in which the Crucified One is proclaimed as the universal Lord. Only then will we realize that the church is more than bricks and wood and steel and concrete...and pews and drapes and stained glass windows.

Only then will we see that a church is more than land and lights and windows and doors, but rather a hope and faith and love and kindness...and people...PEOPLE OF GOD.

But along with the word MISSION John Stott points out the importance of the word EVANGELISM. The word Evangelism is an outgoing active word which results from our concept of Mission. Mission is a comprehensive word, embracing everything which God sends his people into the world to do. It therefore includes evangelism and social responsibility, since both are authentic expressions of the love which longs to serve man in his need. The priority of evangelism suggests that Christians should feel an acute pain of conscience and compassion when human beings are oppressed or neglected in any way, whether what is being denied them is civil liberty, racial respect, education, medicine, employment, or adequate food, clothing and shelter. Anything which undermines human dignity should be an offense to us. But in all of this in our evangelistic concern our chief burden should be for those whom Peter Wagner of the Fuller School of World Mission and Institute Growth calls "The Fourth World" namely the more than 2,700 million unreached peoples of the world.

Christians often do not grasp this biblical balance, but it will make a vast difference in evangelism and our concept of evangelism as we look at Eastern thinking. The

non-Christian who tends to think like a logical-empiricist . will often argue, "well, prove to me that there is a God." If caught off balance a Christian might fall into the trap of trying to do just that. Even if the Christian were successful, however, he would not have turned the non-believer into a Christian. A more helpful approach would be to try to show the agnostic that all men have firm convictions about many things which they cannot prove — human love or beauty, for example. Are these things unreal because we cannot prove them logically? In this way, he may be opened up to the subjective dimension of human awareness which his empiricist presuppositions tend to devalue.

On the other hand, the mystic or eastern mind will often say, "Well, If Jesus turns you on, OK; it's true for you; but I don't need it because I've already experienced God in my own way." The trap here is that a Christian might try to convince such a person that he does need the "Jesus experience" because it is in some way superior to anything he has so far known. But again, even if the Christian were successful, there would be no conversion. To help him really, the Christian must challenge him concerning the historical dimension of biblical faith. He must see that it is not merely a subjective wish fulfillment, but that there is objective evidence that demands a verdict.

We do not have to deny the reality of his mystical experiences. We need only suggest that, like a man with blurred vision trying to read a message, he is not seeing the whole meaning of knowing God. To do that he must have something on which to focus his mind — and that is Jesus and the gospel. Christians need to draw the attention of those inclined to mysticism to the fact that there is a real world outside which they cannot escape. And that is the real world God has revealed himself to man's understanding.

Understanding this balance between the objective and subjective elements in revelation will make Christians more cautious in their witness. It is not enough to get an intellectual decision or agreement with the facts of the gospel. Equally, it will not be sufficient merely to impart some spiritual experiences. There must be an intelligent grasp of the objective Word and clear evidence of the inward subjective application of that truth by the Holy Spirit. So there must be faith and repentance — a change of mind and a change of heart — before we assure a person that he is a Christian. I like the comment Clements provides when he said,

There is very little difference between getting spiritually excited by chanting 'Hare Krishna' in an ashram and chanting 'Jesus, Jesus' in a prayer meeting. Christians can do better than trying to work up that kind of mindless ecstasy, for they have a body of revealed truth from God himself.⁹

⁹R. D. Clements, God and the Gurus (Downers Grove: IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1975), p. 54.

In relation to all of this MISSION AND EVANGELISM it has been noted that mission denotes the self-giving service which God sends his people into the world to render, and includes both evangelism and socio-political action; that within this broadly conceived mission a certain urgency is present in evangelism, which is including an announcing or proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. This brings us to the word DIALOGUE and as John Stott reminds us it presents the question: "Is there any room for dialogue in the proclamation of the good news?" Again there are extreme views. At the risk of being unfair I am going to risk omitting the arguments against dialogue and mention only the argument for dialogue as outlined in Stott's book.¹⁰ He suggests that true dialogue is a mark of authenticity. If we do nothing but proclaim the gospel to people from a distance, our personal authenticity is bound to be suspect. Secondly, true dialogue is a mark of humility. As we listen to another person, our respect for him as a human being made in God's image grows. We begin to realize that we cannot sweep away all his cherished convictions with a brush, unfeeling dismissal. Thirdly, true dialogue is a mark of integrity. In the conversation we listen to our friend's real beliefs and problems, and divest our minds of the false images we may have harbored.

¹⁰Stott, pp. 64-71.

Fourthly, true dialogue is a mark of sensitivity. Christian evangelism falls into disrepute when it degenerates into stereotypes. It is impossible to evangelize by fixed formulae. To force a conversation along predetermined lines in order to reach a predetermined destination is to show oneself grievously lacking in sensitivity both to the actual needs of our friend and to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Such insensitivity is therefore a failure in both faith and love. John Stott presents two most impressive examples of Dialogue with Hindus and Dialogue with Moslems and writes,

In the dialogue which developed the emphasis was neither on the rival civilizations of East and West, nor on the rival Scriptures of Hindus and Christians, nor even on the rival personalities of Krishna and Christ, but on what each man's religion meant to him in his own experience.¹¹

He mentioned that two particular aspects of that method impressed him. The first is fairness and the second was mutual respect.

Dialogue is a token of genuine Christian love, because it indicates our steadfast resolve to rid our minds of the prejudices and caricatures which we may entertain about other people; to struggle to listen through their ears and look through their eyes so as to grasp what prevents them from hearing the gospel and seeing Christ;

¹¹Ibid., p. 74.

to sympathize with them in all their doubts, fears and "hang-ups."

So we have said that Mission denotes what God sends his people into the world to do, and the primary importance within this mission of sacrificial service is evangelism, the sharing with others of God's good news about Jesus. Dialogue, a serious conversation in which we listen as well as speak, is an activity closely related to evangelism. This leads to a fourth word SALVATION: What does Salvation mean? In the Scriptures Salvation and Covenant always belong together. In the New Testament the Exodus becomes a picture of our redemption from sin by Christ, not a promise of liberation for all politically oppressed minorities. Salvation is personal freedom. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. The salvation Christ gives to his people, is freedom from sin in all its ugly manifestations and liberation into a new life of service, until finally we attain "the glorious liberty of the children of God." Werner Foerster and Georg Fohrer "...are agreed that salvation words are primarily negative and emphasize what we are saved from."¹² Three aspects Stott presents in relation to salvation include freedom from judgment for sonship, freedom from self for service, and freedom from decay for glory. So salvation is the goal, the personal freedom

¹²Stott, p. 101.

through Christ, with unavoidable social implications in anticipation of the eschatological freedom of glory when God makes all things new.

One of the most difficult problems which the growth of Eastern mystic groups in the West brings to the Christian church is the need to communicate the gospel to people who have imbibed a totally different philosophy. I might conclude by presenting a few suggestions of what one might do or not do in attempting to communicate:

1. Do not attend meetings of various eastern mystical groups. It is very unlikely that attendance at such meetings or lectures will be very constructive. Discussion on an individual basis is one thing, becoming involved in group meetings is another.
2. Do not swap spiritual experiences. A Christian may say "Jesus coming into your life is a much better experience than your Guru's knowledge." The reply could well be, "Taste Guru's knowledge and then you can judge." "I don't need to I've got Jesus." To which a reply may well be given, "OK, then, when you want Guru's knowledge, you can come."
3. Do not argue belligerently. I have covered already the spirit which we should be communicating with other persons.
4. Do not quote isolated biblical texts. Most mystical groups apparently can do the same, and it is often very difficult to sidestep their sophistry.
5. Do not get impatient. As they understand truth, it cannot be arrived by intellectual pursuit but only by experience.

And then there are a number of positive factors to be considered:

1. Treat devotees as human beings made in the image of God. People who are different from us are not

"specimens." It is important that we try to understand what is being said, and not interrupt.

2. Keep the historical Christ central. Most will accept Jesus Christ as a genuine avatar, the story however of his cross and resurrection are irrelevant to them, since an avatar comes to teach and to reveal "god" consciousness. A useful conversation can sometimes begin, therefore, with the question, "Why did Jesus insist that it was necessary for him to die?" (Mt. 16:21; 17:22-23; Lk. 22:37; 24:44-47). Another possible question might be "If Jesus came only to give the same experience as your Guru, why were the disciples so shocked when he died?"
3. Question the validity of the devotee's interpretation of his experience. A question like, "How does feeling peace and love prove it's true?"
4. Challenge them to face the real world with its problems and conflicts.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A
RESOURCE SECTIONS

RESOURCE FOR TEACHING SESSION 1
"Why Are These Cults Growing?"

THE MYSTICAL MIX-UP: SOME STATISTICS COMPARING
AND CONTRASTING:

There are in this country anywhere from one to three million persons involved in Mystical Cults! There are anywhere between 200 to 2,000 of these new cults in the United States.

EXAMPLES:

T.M.	30,000
EST	100,000
Moon	30,000
ICKCON	10,000

This may sound like a large number but one must remember that in the United States there are approximately:

23.5 million fundamentalists
15.5 million new Evangelicals
20.0 million Liberals
0.1 million Radicals

The following little quiz of 15 questions helps us see somewhat of the general appeal the new cults have. Almost anyone and everyone would be willing to answer yes to most of the questions. The 15 questions relate to the 15 general characteristics of modern American Cults presented by Robert Ellwood in Religions and Spiritual Groups in Modern America.

"THE MYSTICAL MIX-UP"

Let's take a little test...(just for fun)!

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
1. Would you like to have special insights into the future?	_____	_____
2. Do you like to experience things rather than just hear about them or reading about them?	_____	_____
3. Do you feel it is good to be modern and up-to-date?	_____	_____
4. Do you enjoy helping other people?	_____	_____
5. Does tradition, orthodoxy and history sometimes seem to be a drag and hindrance to progress?	_____	_____
6. Do you enjoy having a choice and avoid conflicts if at all possible?	_____	_____
7. Would you like to rid yourself of temporal concerns and understand reality and being in a greater way?	_____	_____
8. Do you enjoy being with people who are optimistic and growing and moving toward success?	_____	_____
9. Would you like to experience healing in mind, body, and spirit?	_____	_____
10. Would you like to experience supernatural events and have deep understanding into spiritual things?	_____	_____
11. Do you want to understand clearly where you are now in life and where you are going?	_____	_____
12. Do you have an appreciation for sacred things and sometimes feel a need to worship?	_____	_____

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
13. Are you interested in spiritual things and sensitive to non-physical forces like the soul and mind of people?	_____	_____
14. Do you like being dealt with personally rather than as a member or statistic in mass groups?	_____	_____
15. Do you enjoy taking part in things with friends? Being with people you enjoy and having fun?	_____	_____

NOTES

GENERAL
C H A R A C T E R I S T I C S
OF MODERN AMERICAN CULTS*

1. A founder who has had, or at least seems to know the secret of
Nontemporal Ecstatic Experience .
2. An interpretation of the experience as Poession or
Marvelous travel.
3. A desire to be Modern and to use Scientific language.
4. A band of supernormal helpers.
5. A reaction against Orthodoxy .
6. Eclecticism and Syncretism .
Which means...Eclecticism: "selecting or choosing"
Syncretism: "union, fusion of conflicting ideas."
7. A Monastic and Impersonal Ontology .
Which means...Monastic: "Secluded from temporal concerns."
Impersonal Ontology: "Science of reality and being."
8. Optimism Success orientation, and a tendency toward evolutionary views.
9. Emphasis on Healing .
10. Use in many cases of Magic techniques.
11. A Simple but Definite process of entry and initiation.
12. In some cases, the establishment of a Sacred Center .

*Robert S. Ellwood Jr. Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), pp. 28-31.

13. Emphasis on Psychic powers.
14. Tendency to attract Isolated Individuals
rather than Family Groups.
15. Increasing emphasis on Participation by all members
in the ecstatic experience through group Chanting,
and Meditation.

RESOURCE FOR TEACHING SESSION 2

"A Basic World View"

"THE MYSTICAL MIX-UP"

I. WHAT IS A BASIC WORLD VIEW?

A set of....PRESUPPOSITIONS OR ASSUMPTIONS

HELD

CONSCIOUSLY OR SUBCONSCIOUSLY

FIRST ASSUMPTION: "Something Exists" which brings us to
two branches of Philosophy:

METAPHYSICS: STUDY OF "BEING"

EPISTEMOLOGY: STUDY OF "KNOWING"

Something IS there but...WHAT?

For some: Matter is all that there is..."ONE"

For others: "One thing" BUT...NOT MATTER BUT SPIRIT OR SOUL
"NON-MATERIAL"

HOW DOES ONE DECIDE ON A WORLD VIEW??

1. What is Prime Reality?
2. Who is Man?
3. What Happens at Death?
4. What is Basis of Morality?
5. What is Meaning of Human History?

OTHER ISSUES THAT ARISE:

1. What is Nature of World?
2. Who is in charge...God, Man or Both?
3. Is Man determined or free?
4. How can one know? BETTER YET...How can we know
what we KNOW?
5. Who makes values? Man? God? No one?
6. Is God personal?
7. Does God exist at all?

"Though these questions seem clear for some they may be very
unclear or different for another!"

"What is obvious to us may be a lie from hell to our neighbor
next door!"

NOTES

THE PROBLEM OF UNDERSTANDING EASTERN THOUGHT:

1. Not just learning NEW CONCEPTS!
2. A totally different EPISTEMOLOGY system of
"knowing."

CONTRAST.....

WESTERN THINKING

1. Scientific Ideas
2. Analysis
3. Classification and Reason
4. Splitting into various parts
5. Causes and giving names to these causes
6. Verbally communicable
7. Linear progression of ideas
8. Separate ourself

Subject or the Knower from the Object or the Known

EASTERN THINKING

1. Reject scientific
2. Reality is "Non-Dual"
3. Analyses and Words is only an Illusion
4. Experience and the "Oneness"
5. Monism

NOTES

RESOURCE FOR TEACHING SESSION 3

"Contrast of Theism and Pantheistic Monism"

"THE MYSTICAL MIX-UP"

AGREE DISAGREE

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | 1. God is the one, infinite-impersonal, ultimate reality. God is all that exists, nothing exists that is not God. |
| _____ | _____ | 2. Some things are more real than others. |
| _____ | _____ | 3. The chief thing about God is his oneness, which passes beyond personality. |
| _____ | _____ | 4. The crucial issue in life is not to be on the same path with others, but rather to be headed in the right direction on our own path. |
| _____ | _____ | 5. In life our present fate is the resent of past action. |
| _____ | _____ | 6. Death is the end of individual, personal existence. |
| _____ | _____ | 7. We may pass beyond knowledge and find that true reality is one. |
| _____ | _____ | 8. Yesterday's facts are not meaningful in themselves. They do not bear on me today unless they have a here-and now meaning. |

NOTES

"THE MYSTICAL MIX-UP"

THEISM	PANTHEISTIC MONISM
GOD IS <u>PERSONAL</u>	MAN IS <u>EVERYTHING</u>
<u>GOD</u> CREATES EVERYTHING	SOME THINGS ARE MORE <u>ONE</u> THAN OTHERS
MAN IS THE IMAGE OF <u>GOD</u> <u>PERSONALITY</u>	BEYOND <u>PERSONALITY</u> TOWARDS <u>"ONENESS"</u>
<u>GOD</u> COMMUNICATES: THROUGH JESUS CHRIST AND THE SCRIPTURES (General and Specific Revelation)	<u>MANY</u> ROADS LEAD TO THE <u>"ONE"</u>
THE <u>" SIN "</u> <u>QUESTION</u> GOD'S REDEMPTION PLAN FOR MAN!	PASS BEYOND <u>GOOD</u> AND <u>EVIL</u>
DEATH IS ETERNAL LIFE WITH <u>GOD</u> OR ETERNAL SEPARATION FROM <u>GOD</u>	DEATH IS <u>PERSONAL</u> <u>EXTINCTION</u> OR <u>REINCARNATION</u>

THEISM

PANTHEISTIC MONISM

ETHICS IS BASED UPON

MAN MAY PASS BEYOND

GODKNOWLEDGEHISTORY IS LINEARHISTORY IS CYCICALNOTES

"THE MYSTICAL MIX-UP"

CHRISTIAN THEISM

1. God is infinite and personal (Triune), transcendent and immanent, omniscient, sovereign, and good.

God is infinite:	meaning beyond scope, beyond measure.
God is personal:	meaning He is not mere force or energy or existent "substance." God is personality which includes self-reflection and self-determination. God thinks and God acts.
God is transcendent:	meaning that He is beyond us and our world. God is "otherly."
God is immanent:	meaning that God is present, He is with us.
God is omniscient:	meaning that He is all-knowing.
God is sovereign:	meaning that He is infinite, nothing is beyond His interest, control and authority.
God is good:	meaning that He is goodness and goodness is the essence of His character. This is expressed through His holiness and through His love.
2. God created the cosmos ex nihilo to operate with a uniformity of cause and effect in an open system.
3. Man is created in the image of God and thus possesses personality, self-transcendence, intelligence, morality, gregariousness and creativity.
4. God can and does communicate with man (by general and specific revelation).
5. Man was created good, but through the Fall the image of God became defaced, though not so ruined as not to be capable of restoration; through the work of Christ, God redeemed man and began the process of restoring man to goodness, though any given man may choose to reject that redemption.

6. For man death is either the gate to life with God and His people or the gate to eternal separation from the only thing that will ultimately fulfill man's aspirations.
7. Ethics is transcendent and is based on the character of God as good (holy and loving).
8. History is linear, a meaningful sequence of events leading to the fulfillment of God's purposes for man.

NOTES

"MYSTICAL MIX-UP"

EASTERN PANTHEISTIC MONISM

1. MAN IS EVERYTHING. He is actually God, and God is one, infinite-impersonal and ultimate reality. God is the world and all that exists, nothing exists that is not God.
2. SOME THINGS ARE MORE ONE THAN OTHERS.
3. TO REALIZE ONE'S ONENESS WITH THE COSMOS IS TO PASS BEYOND PERSONALITY.
4. MANY IF NOT ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE "ONE."
5. TO REALIZE ONE'S ONENESS WITH THE COSMOS IS TO PASS BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL: The cosmos is perfect at every moment.
6. DEATH IS THE END OF INDIVIDUAL, PERSONAL EXISTENCE, BUT IT CHANGES NOTHING ESSENTIAL IN MAN'S NATURE. The soul is indestructible. The Soul survives, but it is impersonal. When the soul is re-incarnated, it becomes another person.
7. TO REALIZE ONE'S ONENESS WITH THE COSMOS IS TO PASS BEYOND KNOWLEDGE. Reality is one.
8. TO REALIZE ONE'S ONENESS WITH THE ONE IS TO PASS BEYOND TIME. TIME IS UNREAL. HISTORY IS CYCICAL.

NOTES

RESOURCE FOR TEACHING SESSION 4

"The Uniqueness of Christian Scriptures and
of the Person of Jesus Christ"

"THE MYSTICAL MIX-UP"

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

1. To me, the Bible is _____
2. One thing I don't understand about the Bible is _____

3. Though I do not understand a great deal about Eastern Mystical groups, one thing about them that I do appreciate is _____

4. I would like to ask a devotee from an Eastern Religious group _____

5. One thing I wish Eastern Religious devotees would do more is _____

6. If I could only persuade an Eastern Religious devotee to believe one thing, it would be _____
7. Of all the questions I have about Eastern Mystical Religions, the one I would like answered most is _____

"THE MYSTICAL MIX-UP"

I. THE UNIQUENESS OF OUR SCRIPTURES:

The composition of the Bible includes 40 different authors' writing, books which cover 1,600 years in the writing.

It's popularity and acclaim: The Bible is now translated in 197 languages and is still the world's best seller.

It is unique, it has POWER, and its central figure is Christ.

A. HISTORICAL REASON:

1. The NUMBER of AVAILABLE MANUSCRIPTS.

Today we have available 4,000 Greek manuscripts.

We compare these to the following works:

- a. Caesar's Gallic War which was composed between 58 and 50 BC, we have only 9 or 10 copies available.
- b. Of the 142 books of the Roman History of Livy we have only 35 copies available.
- c. Of the 14 books of the Histories of Tacitus, only 4½ copies are available.
- d. Of the 16 books of his Annals we have only 10 in full and 2 in part.
- e. The History of Thucydides is known to us only from 8 manuscripts.

2. The TIME INTERVAL between the original writing and the first available copy of the scripture.

- a. Caesar's Gallic War 900 years.
- b. The History of Thucydides has a time interval between 1,300 years.

B. PROPHEPIC REASON:

C. ARCHAEOLOGICAL REASON:

II. THE UNIQUENESS OF THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

A. His claims concerning HIMSELF.

1. John 10:30-33

2. John 14:6

B. What OTHERS said concerning Him.

1. His enemies: John 5:18

2. Peter: Matthew 16:16

3. Martha: John 11:27

4. Thomas: John 20:25-28

C. According to the above passages, Jesus: 1) claimed to God directly; 2) made the kinds of claims that only a person who presumed he was God would make; 3) was termed God by both friends and enemies without ever attempting to deny it. He even commended His followers for thinking thus. Suppose that Jesus Christ is not God. If He Knew He were not God and that none of these claims were true, what would we conclude about Him?

Suppose Jesus was sincerely wrong. Suppose He sincerely believed all these fantastic claims, even though they were not true. What would we conclude about Him? _____

Does either of the above answers make sense? _____

Discuss why?

Who do you believe that Jesus is and why? Discuss.

APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY OF EASTERN MYSTICAL TERMS¹

Anatman — In Buddhism, the belief that the human being is not composed of soul or spirit, but of a changing variety of sensory impressions, thoughts, feelings and energy.

Asceticism — The view that the physical body is evil and detrimental to a holy life and that only through renunciation of the world can one reach a higher spiritual state.

Ashram — The Hindu name for a settlement of disciples living with or around a guru.

Atman — In Hinduism, the real spiritual self as distinguished from the empirical self or "false ego." According to Hare Krishna, it is that part of an individual which continues in various material forms through reincarnation until the self receives liberation. Also, spirit or world soul.

Avatar — In Hindu usage, any incarnation of the god Vishnu. General usage can refer to the descent of any god into the world in human form, usually to help mankind in a time of crisis.

Bhagavad-Gita — Sanskrit term for "Song of the Divine One." The so-called gospel of the Hindu scriptures containing dialogue between the warrior Arjuna and the god Krishna.

Bhakti or bhakti-yoga — The supposed way to salvation by loving devotion to a personal deity. Is actually a form of works salvation, in that the devotee's devotion earns the deity's favor.

¹Pat Means, The Mystical Maze (San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade For Christ, 1976), pp. 199-205.

Bodhisattva — In Buddhist terminology, one who is qualified to enter Nirvana and become a Buddha, but who prefers to remain a Buddha-to-be in order to work for the salvation and deification of beings on earth. .

Bon' no soku bodai — Nichiren Shoshu concept where worldly desires equal enlightenment.

Brahma — The creator-god in Hindu thought. A member of the triad of Hindu gods along with Shiva and Vishnu.

Brahman — The Absolute; impersonal essence of the universe in Vedanta Hinduism.

Brahmin — Any member of the priestly caste of the Hindu world.

Buddha — An "Awakened One." Refers usually to Siddhartha Gautama, the Indian prince who became an enlightened man and the historic founder of Buddhism.

Butsodon — The black, box-like altar containing the gohonzon that Nichiren Shoshu members face when chanting.

Chaitanya — A 15th century Hindu who began the worship of Krishna as the Supreme Being. Later he was recognized as an incarnation of Krishna.

Chakra — In yoga, one of the so-called "psychic centers" of the human body.

Daimoku — In Nichiren Shoshu, the act of chanting "Nam Myoho Renge Kyo."

Dharma — In Hinduism and Buddhism, the path toward enlightenment or "way of righteousness" which a man must follow. Similar to the concept of "good works."

Eightfold Path — Gautama Buddha's formulation of the eight steps which lead to enlightenment. These are: 1) right viewpoint, 2) right aspiration, 3) right speech, 4) right behavior, 5) right occupation, 6) right effort, 7) right mindfulness and, 8) right meditation.

Enlightenment — In Hindu usage, personal realization of that inward soul called atman which is a portion of the universal essence or Brahman. Hence a realization of man's oneness with the universe and a realization of his deity. In Buddhism, a merging of the personal Buddha nature with the universal Buddha nature or universal energy.

- Esho funi — In Nichiren Shoshu, the oneness of man and his environment.
- Esoteric — Hidden, secret, not accessible to the uninitiated.
- Gautama — Family name of the historic Buddha; also spelled Gotama.
- Gohonzon — In Nichiren Shoshu, a small scroll-like paper containing a list of names of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas found in a teaching called the Lotus Sutra.
- Gongyo — In Nichiren Shoshu, selections from two chapters of the Lotus Sutra. Practitioners chant the gongyo each morning and evening while facing the gohonzon or altar.
- Guru — A spiritual guide, one who oversees others in religious instruction. Means literally "to lead from darkness to light."
- Hatha yoga — The form of yoga stressing physical conditioning. It is based on purely Hindu philosophy and is designed to lead the practitioner to an eventual practice of the philosophical and religious aspects of yoga.
- Intuition — The non-rational, feeling-oriented capacity of the human mind emphasized as the key to ultimate reality in mysticism.
- ISKCON — Acronym for International Society for Krishna Consciousness, the official name of the Hare Krishna movement.
- Jnana yoga — The school of yoga stressing the path of knowledge to spiritual enlightenment.
- Karma — Literally, one's deeds; the effects of one's deeds, good or bad, which determine the place and condition in which one is reborn, and one's rewards or punishments after death. The so-called universal law of cause and effect.
- Karma yoga — The yoga path that supposedly leads to release through selfless activity or good works.
- Koan — In Zen Buddhism, a term or riddle which cannot be solved by the intellect alone.

Kosen Rufu — In Nichiren Shoshu, the attainment of world peace through the spread of the movement's beliefs.

Krishna — The Supreme Being of the Hare Krishna movement. A personal deity said by ISKCON to be an even higher manifestation of god than the impersonal Brahman. Other branches of Hinduism view Krishna as just one of many gods of similar rank.

Kundalini — A form of yoga in which "serpent power," or occult powers residing at the base of the spine, are summoned to the brain through certain yoga techniques. This endows the practitioner with superhuman psychic and spiritual powers which lead to samhadi or enlightenment.

Lama — A Tibetan Buddhist monk or spiritual leader.

Lotus Sutra — A teaching ascribed to Sakyamuni Buddha, though actually written much later than his time. It includes the gongyo, book of chants and prayers, in Nichiren Shoshu liturgy.

Mahabharata — The ancient epic poem of India, including the Bhagavad-Gita.

Mandala — A mystical diagram used as an aid in meditation.

Mantra — A sacred word, verse or syllable which embodies in sound some specific deity or supernatural power. An aid in meditation.

Maya — "Illusion" in Hinduism, the cosmic force which produces the phenomena of material existence. All that is finite and subject to decay, all that is not eternal and unchangeable is considered maya.

Metaphysics — The study of the nature of ultimate reality.

Moksha — The Hindu term for liberation from the bondage of finite existence. The identification of oneself with the ultimate reality — eternal, changeless, blissful — or in a state of complete indifference, either with or without loss of consciousness. A state supposedly beyond good and evil, pleasure and pain.

Monism — The philosophical doctrine that there is only one ultimate reality in existence, and that all things are parts of or composed of this reality.

Mudra — The "mystic seal" of oriental occultism; a series of occult signs made with the fingers, and considered to have magical effects.

Mysticism — Any philosophy or doctrine centered more on the worlds of the spirit than the material universe and aimed at the spiritual union or mental oneness with the universal spirit through an intuitive grasp of reality.

Nam Myoho Renge Kyo — The phrase Nichiren Shoshu practitioners chant to the gohonzon. One meaning ascribed to the phrase is: "Devotion to the mystic law of cause and effect through sound."

Nichiren Daishonen — A 13th century Japanese monk, and the historic founder of Nichiren Shoshu.

Nirvana — In Buddhism, the attainment of final enlightenment and freedom from rebirth. In the oriental philosophical doctrines, the absolute and final extinction of individuality, without loss of consciousness.

Om, also spelled Aum — The most revered mantra contained within the Vedas, ancient Hindu scriptures.

Pantheism — The doctrine that reality involves a single being of which all things are modes, moments, members, appearances or projections. Pantheism teaches the essential imminence of God in all creatures and things. It identifies God with nature and nature with God, teaching that the forces and laws manifest in the universe, the entire Cosmos, the whole of reality itself, are God.

Puja — In Hinduism, the term for worship; religious service. In Transcendental Meditation, a written portion of the controversial initiation ceremony that is read in Sanskrit by the TM instructor. The writing contains a listing of the principal deities of classical Hinduism and brings worship to the Maharishi's spiritual master, Guru Dev.

Puranas — Ancient Hindu texts telling stories of gods, goddesses and mythological events; part of the folklore of Hinduism embodying also social and religious instruction.

Raja yoga — The Hindu path to God involving psychological experimentation; usually involves practicing certain mental exercises and observing the effects of these on one's spiritual condition.

Rationalism — A system or doctrine which makes reason the sole guide in the interpretation of reality.

Reincarnation — Belief in many rebirths for each soul or spirit.

Rig Veda — One of the ancient authoritative scriptures of Hinduism.

Rishi — Sanskrit word meaning "seer" or "sage."

Sakyamuni, also spelled Shakyamuni — Sanskrit for "Great Sage." A name of Gautama Buddha, founder of Buddhism.

Samadhi — Sanskrit word for "putting together." Profound meditation, absorption in the spirit. The final stage in the practice of yoga, in which the individual becomes one with the object of meditation, thus attaining a condition of super-consciousness and blissfulness, which is called moksha.

Sanskrit — The ancient unwritten language of Hinduism. Believed to have magical effects when spoken or even thought.

Satori — The Japanese Zen Buddhist term for enlightenment.

Shakubuku — In Nichiren Shoshu, the act of telling non-believers about the practice of "True Buddhism" as embodied in NSA. The term literally means "break and subdue," and in Japan has come to be known as forced conversions.

Shikishin funi — Nichiren Shoshu belief asserting the oneness of the physical and the spiritual. From this doctrine springs a flat denial of the existence of a Supreme Being or a spirit world.

Shiva — One of the three gods of Hinduism, commonly termed the Destroyer.

Siddha — In Hindu mystic and occultic terminology, a man who possesses supernatural powers.

Soka Gakkai — The lay movement within Nichiren Shoshu begun by a Japanese school teacher named Makiguchi in the 1930's. Nichiren Shoshu's aggressive proselytizing techniques can be attributed to Makiguchi's zealously intolerant attitude toward other religions. Soka Gakkai means "Value Creation Society."

Sutra — The Sanskrit word for Buddhist scriptures, meaning a discourse by the Buddha, or a disciple, accepted as authoritative teaching.

Swami — A Sanskrit word meaning spiritual teacher or learned, holy man.

Tantra — A body of esoteric Hindu religious literature said to have been revealed by the god Shiva for man's guidance. These scriptures place emphasis on the worship of the female essence of the universe. From this foundation, an erotic religion known as Tantrism has formed, featuring worship of sexual union among other practices.

Taoism — Chinese religion based on the Tao, an ancient writing attributed to Lao-Tse. Foremost among Taoist concepts is the yin and yang, symbolizing the convergent and divergent aspects of the universe; good and evil, male and female, etc.

Theosophy — In general, a philosophical system claiming to hold divine wisdom and the true knowledge of the existence and nature of the deity. Specifically, a society founded in 1875 by Madame Helena Blavatsky in New York City for the study of occult and esoteric religions worldwide.

Unconscious mind — A compartment of the mind which lies outside the consciousness.

Upanishad — Sanskrit for secret teaching or esoteric doctrine. The Upanishads form the third of the Vedas, recording the speculations of Hindu sages on such topics as the nature of ultimate reality and the way to spiritual union with the absolute.

Vedanta — The best known and most popular formulation of Hindu mystic philosophy. The Vedanta school teaches that the phenomenal world is mere illusion and has only seeming reality, as have also the apparent individual selves of the world. Vedantists say there is but one true self. Brahman-Atman.

Vishnu — One of the three gods of Hinduism (Brahma, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; and Shiva; the Destroyer).

Wheel of Samsara — In Hinduism and occult terminology, the wheel of suffering in life, the chain of births and rebirths.

Yin and Yang — In Chinese thought, the two primary forces of the universe. The yin symbolizes the female, passive force and the yang, the male, active essence.

Yoga — Literally, "union." The Hindu path to God, taking various forms within the eastern sects.

Yogi — Literally, one who practices yoga.

APPENDIX C

A WHO'S WHO OF GURUS¹

AND OTHER MYSTICS

Carlos Castaneda — Mexican mystic who apprenticed himself to a Yaqui Indian sorcerer named Don Juan. His books, The Teachings of Don Juan (1968), A Separate Reality (1971), Journey to Ixtlan (1972) and Tales of Power (1974), contain accounts of the occult and the demonic and have all been best sellers on university campuses throughout the West.

Sri Chinmoy — Founder of the Lighthouse Mission. Sri Chinmoy is believed to have reached the highest state of samadhi, enlightenment, while still only a child of 13. At the age of 32, Chinmoy left his native Bengal and came to America. His movement, centered around an almost god-like worship of himself, has grown to where it includes a few hundred American participants. In keeping with their devotion to Chinmoy, followers maintain their own family altars where they meditate before a photograph of their spiritual leader every day. Chinmoy's followers believe that by totally surrendering their minds to him, they will experience enlightenment.

Baba Ram Dass — The former Richard Alpert and Harvard University instructor. In the aftermath of his LSD experimentation and subsequent dismissal from Harvard, Alpert headed east in search of more permanent "highs." In Nepal he met a young American who had spent five years studying with a guru in that area. The American escorted Alpert to an ashram near the Himalayas where he met Maharaj Nimcorola. Alpert studied under Nimcorola for six months, eventually returning to the States to share his insights. His book, Be Here Now, purports to offer spiritual advice for modern seekers. His teachings under the acquired name, Baba Ram Dass, underscore the eastern belief in total commitment to the guru to achieve enlightenment.

¹Pat Means, The Mystical Maze (San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1976), pp. 207-209.

Werner Erhard — Founder of est (Erhard Seminars Training). Born John Paul Rosenberg, he changed his name in 1960 after deserting his wife and four children. He joined many cult groups including Scientology and Zen, the latter's philosophy providing much of the basis for est. The cult was formed in 1971.

Bubba Free John — Formerly Franklin Jones, Bubba Free John is considered by knowledgeable students of the East to be the first American-born siddha, one who possesses spiritual powers. He studied under kundalini practitioner, Swami Muktananda, among many others, and eventually regained the "enlightenment" he claims to have lost in his youth. Free John founded the Dawn Horse Communion near San Francisco where he presides as guru over a small colony of devotees. There Free John guides them through the techniques of kundalini yoga and displays, at times, extreme psychic and spiritual influence over his followers. Free John openly claims to be Brahman, the impersonal absolute of Vedantist Hindu doctrine.

Guru Maharaj Ji — Born Prem Pal Singh Rawat in Hardwar, India, Maharaj Ji became the leader of his father's disciples in 1966. Four years later he dropped out of the ninth grade to spread the message of the Divine Light Mission to the world. His movement reached a peak with Millenium '73, held in the Astrodome in Houston. Despite the fanfare, fewer than 20,000 of the expected 80,000 devotees attended. Today, Maharaj Ji is no longer considered the perfect spiritual master, in keeping with the movement's new Madison Avenue approach. His new position as mere corporate executive for Divine Light grew partially out of a 1974 schism which saw his mother, Mata Ji, harshly criticize him for alleged ungodly behavior. Before her statement, Maharaj Ji was considered by devotees to be God incarnate. The guru is now trying to put together the same "secular" image that the TM organization has found so useful.

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi — Founder of Transcendental Meditation (TM). His name, Maharishi, means "great sage." Born in north central India in 1911, Mahesh studied physics at Allahabad University and graduated at the age of 31. He studied under a Hindu swami named Guru Dev in the Himalayas for 11 years, emerging in 1959 to spread his teaching to the world. His

movement blossomed briefly in 1968 when such notables as the Beatles and Mia Farrow joined up. Their devotion, however, proved temporary and the Maharishi's movement died out almost overnight. Today, a revitalized version of TM enjoys phenomenal success in the West, despite impending legal action aimed at proving TM to be religious in nature. The movement has deceptively claimed to be a science. Maharishi is considered to be a fully-realized form of divinity by his inner core of disciples.

Sun Myung Moon — Founder of the Unification Church. Reverend Moon was born in Korea in January, 1920. In 1936, young Moon had a vision in which Jesus Christ supposedly appeared to him, christening him for a mission to save mankind. Nine years later he began preaching, and in 1954, Moon founded the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity. He came to America in 1972, establishing his new headquarters in Tarrytown, New York. He is viewed by followers as the "Second Advent Jesus," mankind's co-redeemer along with Jesus Christ.

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada — Founder and spiritual head of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), commonly known as the Hare Krishna movement. Prabhupada was born Abhay Charan De on September 1, 1896, in Calcutta, India. He studied English, philosophy and economics at the University of Calcutta but failed to graduate. He left his wife and family in 1959 to study under a guru named Goswami. In 1965, Goswami sent him westward to bring the message of Krishna to the United States. Devotees look upon Prabhupada as an incarnation of their god, Krishna.

Chogyam Trungpa — Popular exponent of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy in the West. Trungpa, like many Tibetan monks (lamas), fled to the West in the late 1950's when the Red Chinese attacked Tibet. Trungpa founded the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado.

APPENDIX D

A COMPENDIUM OF EASTERN CULTS¹

Ananda Marga — Founded in India by Shri Anandamurti, this group features a mixture of kundalini yoga and good works. Western disciples involve themselves in humanitarian services such as disaster relief and visiting the old and the sick. There are 3,000 followers of Ananda Marga in the United States. The name Ananda Marga means "Joy" or "Bliss Path."

Arica — A cosmic consciousness movement founded by Oscar Ichazo. The movement features instruction designed to supposedly awaken the conscious mind and believes that it alone has been entrusted with the teachings that will "save the world." The movement's philosophy draws heavily from such eastern groups as Tibetan Buddhism, yoga and Zen. The group is named after the Chilean hometown of founder Ichazo.

Association for Research and Enlightenment — Famed psychic Edgar Cayce founded this group in Virginia Beach, Virginia, in 1931. Cayce, known as the "sleeping prophet," gained fame through self-induced trances in which he would predict future events and diagnose diseases, all with a seemingly high degree of accuracy. Cayce's popular "life readings," in which he would claim to describe a person's previous lives, fueled interest in reincarnation. Cayce's trance information was consistently in conflict with Jesus' own teachings on such subjects as life after death, however. Cayce died in 1945. His son, Hugh, now presides over the movement and its 13,000 U.S. followers.

Bahai — A religion based on Islam. Bahai stresses world peace through devotion to Baha u llah, a 19th century prophet who claimed he was the Messiah. Today this religion has nearly 100,000 followers in America. Its headquarters is in Wilmette, Illinois.

¹Pat Means, The Mystical Maze (San Bernardino, CA: Campus Crusade For Christ, 1976), pp. 211-213.

Divine Light Mission — A Hindu movement, the Divine Light Mission was founded in the U.S. by the then 13-year-old guru Maharaj Ji in 1971. Known to his disciples as "Perfect Spiritual Master," Maharaj Ji gathered a large following throughout the world, at one time numbered at well over two million. Premies (disciples) learn how to "receive knowledge" from the guru in an effort to discover the "divine self" within. This discovery, they believe, leads to enlightenment. Today the Divine Light Mission appears to be remodeling its movement after the highly successful Transcendental Meditation organization.

Eckankar — Based on Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, Eckankar was founded by an American named Paul Twitchell. This cult, defined as the ancient science of soul travel, teaches the monist viewpoint that the world is one essence, composed of spirit. The physical world is considered to be unreal. The way to escape the illusory physical realm is through soul travel, a technique taught only by certified Eck masters. This cult has many of the earmarks of the first-century heresy called Gnosticism, a religion that denied the existence of the physical realm. Followers of Eckankar believe that Jesus is simply an advanced Eck master.

Erhard Seminars Training (est) — Werner Erhard, formally John Paul Rosenberg, founded est in 1971. This movement is subtly based on Zen Buddhism and features an anti-authoritarian mindset. Instructees receive teaching designed to stop the rational mind and open them to experiencing the so-called "ever present now."

Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization (3HO) — A kundalini yoga sect founded by yogi Bhajan. This sect is based on sikhism, a mixture of Hinduism and Islam, and teaches both monotheism and reincarnation. Enlightenment is achieved within this cult through the awakening of the kundalini or "serpent power" located at the base of the spine. Through various yoga techniques this mystic power coils its way up the spine eventually uniting with the mind to produce a state of altered consciousness or enlightenment.

International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) — Known popularly as Hare Krishna, ISKCON is a bhakti yoga sect of Hinduism stressing devotion to the god Krishna. Founded in the U.S. in 1965 by Indian swami A. C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada, the Hare Krishna movement features an ascetic lifestyle. Devotees must chant the name of Krishna daily in attempts to defeat worldly desire and train all thought totally on Krishna. When this is achieved, the devotee is said to be enlightened. Devotees recognize Prabhupada as an incarnation of Krishna.

Meher Baba — A small eastern cult founded on devotion to a deceased Indian, Merwan Sheriar Irani, who was better known as Meher Baba, "Compassionate Father." Irani thought himself to be a divine avatar or savior, and he claimed to be the last and greatest of the divine incarnations. A peculiar characteristic of Meher Baba was his self-imposed silence lasting from about 1926 until his death in 1969. During this time he communicated by means of hand signals and an alphabet board.

Nichiren Shoshu — A Buddhist sect also known as Nichiren Shoshu/Soka Gakkai, NSA devotion is directed around the butsodon, an altar-like box containing a small scroll called the gohonzon. Members chant portions of a teaching called the Lotus Sutra while facing the gohonzon. They believe such devotion will enable them to attain their personal desires and also bring them enlightenment.

Ouspensky-Gurdjieff — The product of two Russian intellectuals, P. D. Ouspensky and George Gurdjieff, this movement stresses extreme self-awareness. At local meetings practitioners indulge in discussion and Sufi-style dancing designed to awaken the disciple to true awareness. This cult has fewer than 5,000 followers in the United States.

Scientology — A western religion founded by former science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard. Scientology blends psychotherapy, science fiction and eastern religious philosophies in a teaching which stresses that each human being is a failed god, or Thetan. Through scientology's training, the neophyte works his way out of a state of forgetfulness and back to a realization of his original deity.

Self-Realization Fellowship — A Hindu group founded in 1920 by Paramahansa Yoganada, the Self-Realization Fellowship is one of the primary popularizers of Vedanta philosophy in the West. As is the case with many cult groups, its headquarters is in Los Angeles, California.

Sufism — A system of Mohammedan mysticism and Hinduism stressing bodily movement as a means toward union with God. At Sufi gatherings, devotees dance in circular motion, leading to the description "whirling dervishes" in the Middle East. This is followed by an encounter session where devotees openly interact with one another, showing no inhibitions in expressing their aroused affections for one another. The leader of the Sufis is Idries Shah, who lives in England.

Transcendental Meditation (TM) — Founded by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Transcendental Meditation stresses a mind-clearing philosophy based on Hinduism. Meditators concentrate on a mantra, which is a Sanskrit word, usually associated with a Hindu god. The mantra induces the practitioner into a state of relaxation. The goal of TM is for the mediator to experience "bliss consciousness," a state where normal waking consciousness is transcended and a mystical union with other mental and spiritual realms is achieved.

Unification Church — Founded in the United States by Reverend Sun Myung Moon, the Unification Church teaches that its founder is the so-called Second Advent Christ. Followers believe salvation can only come through devotion to their leader and to the Unification Church. The philosophy behind this cult is a heretical blend of Christianity and Taoism. Moon teaches that God is both male and female, good and evil, a concept common to Taoist thought.

Zen Buddhism — An anti-authoritarian religion that has as its goal a state of enlightenment known as satori. To experience this elusive mental state, Zen monks retire to the monastery to live under the sometimes iron-fisted authority of the Zen master. Meditation on riddles called koans is an aid to enlightenment.

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